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BRITISH  
EMPIRE-  
COMMONWEALTH

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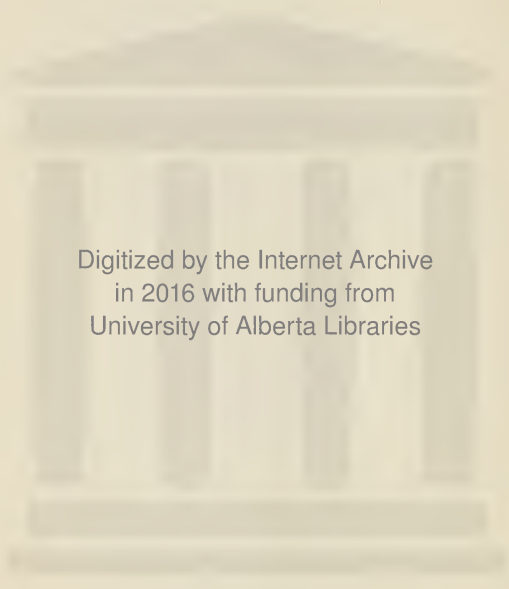
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**The Berkshire Studies in European History**

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## **Berkshire Studies in European History**

*Under the Editorship of*

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# THE BRITISH EMPIRE-COMMONWEALTH

A STUDY IN POLITICAL EVOLUTION

BY

REGINALD GEORGE TROTTER

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, KINGSTON, CANADA

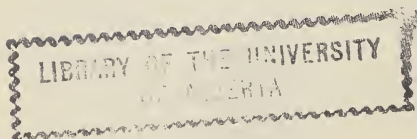
*"Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together."*

*Burke: On Conciliation with America.*



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## PREFACE

The college teacher of general European history is always confronted with the task of finding adequate reading for his classes which is neither too specialized and technical nor too elementary. For many topics, including several of the greatest importance, no such material is at the moment available. Moreover, in too many instances, good reading which undeniably does exist is in the form of a chapter in a larger work and is therefore too expensive for adoption as required reading under normal conditions.

*The Berkshire Studies in European History* have been planned to meet this situation. The topics selected for treatment are those on which there is no easily accessible reading of appropriate length adequate for the needs of a course in general European history. The authors, all experienced teachers, are in nearly every instance actively engaged in the class room and intimately acquainted with its problems. They will avoid a merely elementary presentation of facts, giving instead an interpretive discussion suited to the more mature point of view of college students.

No pretense is made, of course, that these *Studies* are contributions to historical literature in the scholarly sense. Each author, nevertheless, is sufficiently a specialist in the period of which he writes to be familiar with the sources and to have used the latest scholarly contributions to his subject. In order that those who desire to read further on any topic may have some guid-

ance short bibliographies of works in western European languages are given, with particular attention to books of recent date.

Each *Study* is designed as a week's reading. The division into three approximately equal chapters, many of them self-contained and each suitable for one day's assignment, should make the series as a whole easily adaptable to the present needs of college classes. The editors have attempted at every point to maintain and emphasize this fundamental flexibility.

Maps and diagrams will occasionally be furnished with the text when specially needed but a good historical atlas, such as that of Shepherd, is presupposed throughout.

R. A. N.  
L. B. P.  
S. R. P.

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## FOREWORD

THE British Empire-Commonwealth is divided into three parts: Great Britain and the self-governing Dominions, the Empire of India, the Colonial Empire. The Dominions are really not an empire in the old sense but partners with the mother country in what is commonly styled the British Commonwealth. India is still in a measure a dependency of Britain but enjoys some of the attributes of "dominion status." The Colonial Empire is ruled chiefly by British officials, although for parts of it, also, there is envisaged a large measure of eventual self-government.

The principles involved in colonial autonomy and dominion status seem to many students anomalous if not, indeed, incomprehensible. Seen, however, in historical perspective, the existing Empire-Commonwealth, in so much of which the influence of these principles is felt, appears a reasonable consequence of past developments. With its structural evolution this book mainly deals, for the Empire is most significant in those aspects most peculiar to itself.

Legal intricacies are here avoided as of less consequence than the circumstances which have shaped institutions and the ideals by which they work. Among all to whom the author has been indebted for the enlightenment that comes from discussion his principal obligation is to his father, who first introduced him to the character and operation of British political institutions, and inculcated the conviction that in constitutional no less than in other aspects of human affairs, although the mere letter killeth, the spirit maketh alive.





# THE BRITISH EMPIRE-COMMONWEALTH



## CHAPTER I

### THE FOUNDATIONS OF COLONIAL NATIONALITY: CHARTING THE NEW EMPIRE (1783-1860)

#### THE SECOND EMPIRE'S FIRST HALF-CENTURY

THE British Empire as it exists to-day is chiefly a growth of the last century and a half. A large proportion of it has been acquired and its settlements of European stock have been mostly populated since the old Empire was dismembered by the American Revolution.

In 1783 there remained under the British flag some of the sugar islands of the West Indies, whose relative importance in the imperial economy, though then great, later declined. In India significant beginnings of territorial power had been made, but they were slight compared with its later extension. Of strategic posts along the sea-ways of commerce Britain then held few, the most notable being Gibraltar, Bermuda, St. Helena, and several trading posts on the West African coast. The largest single region left in British possession lay north of the United States, but much of it was still important solely as a fur-trading preserve, while the recently conquered St. Lawrence Valley was chiefly French, Nova Scotia was a frontier province yet only slightly developed, and Newfoundland, although an important fishing station, was back-

#### 4 FOUNDATIONS OF COLONIAL NATIONALITY

ward as a settlement colony. The development of British North America was hastened by the Revolution, for the failure of the victorious Republicans either to suppress or to conciliate the Loyalists in their midst gave to the northern colonies some tens of thousands of settlers who were already accustomed to North American life. They extended the areas of settlement by the Atlantic and in the St. Lawrence Basin with the aid as well as under the auspices of British authority, and established there a tradition of devoted if self-interested attachment to the imperial connection, reënforced a generation later by the unhappy conflict of 1812-14 with the United States, which also buttressed the emotional foundations of British North American nationality.

Australia had recently been visited and claimed for Great Britain by Captain Cook, but talk of making plantations on its eastern coast would probably have led to little immediate result, owing to the difficulties of travel and communication with a land so distant before the days of steam and the Suez Canal. The former American colonies, however, being no longer available as a destination for the annual tide of convicts transported at the order of British courts, the flow was now directed to Australia, where a penal settlement was planted in New South Wales in 1788, which became the nucleus of extensive colonization, though the circumstances of its founding retarded for a time its political as well as its social development. Before many years a free population gathered, comprising both emancipists, or former convicts, and free settlers. The latter appreciated the advantages of an established market for their produce and arrived in increasing

numbers after the introduction of sheep and the discovery of rich grazing lands laid the foundations of prosperous growth.<sup>1</sup>

The wars of the French Revolutionary era, culminating in the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, extended British rule and influence in the West Indies, in Central and South America, and in India, while the sea-ways of empire were strengthened by obtaining such strategic points of commercial and naval advantage as Malta, Mauritius, Ceylon, and above all the Cape of Good Hope, the last named being deemed more important then, and for some time afterwards, as a way-station on the sea-route to the East Indies than as a sphere of colonization. Long occupied by the Dutch for the former purpose, it contained a small colonizing population of Dutch and Huguenots (augmented a few years later by immigrants from England), a somewhat larger number of African and Malay slaves, and a very much larger population of free native Africans.

The new Empire was long run mainly on old lines. Some degree of representative government was carried over from the old Empire in certain of the West Indian islands, and in Nova Scotia where an elected assembly

<sup>1</sup> In 1823 the government was placed largely on a civilian basis, and the penal organization of the settlement gave way in part to a system of legalized indentured service similar to that which had been in vogue in the American colonies, the real penal settlement being transferred to Van Diemen's Land (the present Tasmania). Free immigration forthwith increased rapidly. Transportation of convicts continued, however, to the eastern mainland till 1840, when it was abandoned, despite the wish of many of the settlers, after a parliamentary inquiry which brought to light its demoralizing consequences in the colony; to Van Diemen's Land till 1853 where it was abandoned in accord with colonial demand; and lingered in Western Australia till 1868 at the wish of the inhabitants, who desired it as a source of labor.

## 6 FOUNDATIONS OF COLONIAL NATIONALITY

had been granted in 1758 as part of a system patterned on the old royal provinces among the mainland colonies that afterwards revolted.<sup>1</sup> The influence of the transplanted Loyalists led to the establishment of similar representative institutions in New Brunswick in 1784, and in 1791 in Quebec, which was divided for the purpose into two provinces, Upper and Lower Canada, the former comprising the Loyalist settlements on the upper St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, the latter the old French settlements on the lower St. Lawrence. In this granting of elective assemblies there was no intention of handing over control of policy or administration to the colonial populations. Although Parliament had expressed its intention (in 1778) never again to impose taxes for purely revenue purposes in the colonies in North America and the West Indies, it retained control of colonial commerce, and the British Government exercised now a closer and more careful supervision over colonial administration than in the past. The lesson drawn from the losses of the American Revolution was not that there should be less imperial control, but more.

The French Revolution soon strengthened in the British governing classes the dread of popular government alike in the colonies and at home. It is not surprising, then, that in the new possessions acquired during the French wars there was a striking absence of popular assemblies such as had been customarily set up in the colonies of former days, though this is doubtless to be accounted for partly by the fact that the new territories were valued for tropical trade and sea-power rather than for settlement.

<sup>1</sup> Prince Edward Island was granted an assembly in 1773.

But the yeast of more liberal ideas was working, however slowly. Before the old Empire was disrupted Adam Smith had questioned the dogmas of the old mercantilist imperialism, and Edmund Burke had championed the political rights of overseas Britons. Before the eighteenth century closed Burke also found in the Hastings impeachment, despite the bitterness and unfairness with which it was conducted, a dramatic opportunity to preach the ideal of trusteeship in dealings with alien and backward peoples. The religious enthusiasm of the Wesleyan Revival and the Evangelical Movement gave rise at about the same time to English Protestant missions and brought a new and powerful influence to bear upon colonial policy wherever it touched the welfare of subject races. The same enthusiasm hastened measures for the prohibition of the slave traffic in 1807 and the abolition of slavery itself in the Empire in 1833.

The latter measure was not without attendant evils, resulting partly from its suddenness and the inadequacy of the compensation granted to the slave-owners, but partly also from deeper causes. In the West Indies the consequent labor difficulties were blamed by the planters for the decline of the islands in wealth and importance, and the task of government there became peculiarly difficult for many years. In South Africa the Boer settlers were confirmed in their distrust of a colonial policy which had already shown a tendency to favor the blacks rather than the whites while refusing the latter adequate protection against aggressive native tribes. In 1836 occurred the Great Trek, a migration of Boers northward and northeastward to establish new homes beyond British control. Before

## 8 FOUNDATIONS OF COLONIAL NATIONALITY

long their activity against the natives, and the fear of European interference which their presence near the east coast aroused, became the occasion of British annexation of Natal. By cutting off the trekkers from direct sea communications this action lessened the liability of losing control of South Africa, but it led to the Natal Boers trekking again and joining their fellows in establishing distinctively Boer communities north of the Orange and Vaal rivers. Thus was postponed indefinitely the fusion of Briton and Boer, while singleness of white policy towards the natives of South Africa was rendered more difficult than ever.

New interest in overseas possessions was also quickened by need at home, where the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions, though enormously increasing the means of subsistence, so seriously dislocated the organization of society that it could not provide for the rapidly growing population. The consequent difficulties were accentuated by the demobilization and post-war depression following 1815. Emigration offered for many the only escape. Large numbers went to the United States but many also to British North America, Australia and South Africa. For some time the movement was mostly voluntary and haphazard, but the 1830's became remarkable for the advocacy of theories of systematic and extensive migration and settlement, which had in view the growth and welfare of the colonies no less than bettering the situation at home. The most constructive thinker and most active organizer in this movement was Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who first drew wide attention to his theories in 1829. The individual features of his proposals had each been advocated previously, but he fused them



into a systematic and consistent whole. He drew the attention of statesmen as well as of the public as never before to colonial settlement as an imperial problem. A colonization society was formed at his instance in 1830 to promote systematic emigration. Early in 1831 his proposals led to a revision of the Government's land settlement policy in Australia, as a result of which emigration thither was greatly stimulated. It was, indeed, in connection with the affairs of Australasia that the Wakefield group of colonial reformers were most persistent and their ideas most fruitful, particularly in South Australia and New Zealand. Their New Zealand Company by its colonizing activity forced the hand of the British Government, which in 1839 found itself assenting to the formal establishment of British rule despite the wish of the Colonial Office to leave the Maoris to themselves and the missionaries.<sup>1</sup>

The hesitation of the Colonial Office to approve the colonization of New Zealand had been caused by genuine solicitude for the welfare of the natives. But the radical reformers attributed any lack of full support for their schemes to inefficiency or perversity, and became merciless critics of "Mr. Mothercountry." It is true that the number, diversity, and remoteness of the problems with which the Colonial Office had to deal threw much power into the hands of its permanent officials, but history has vindicated their uprightness and devotion, particularly in the case of James Stephen, who during the critical period of the 'thirties and 'forties was the chief target of Radical attacks. Yet some

<sup>1</sup> It should also be said, however, that the annexation, like the planting of West Australia a few years earlier, was hastened by the knowledge of French plans for occupation, which it was just in time to forestall.

## 10 FOUNDATIONS OF COLONIAL NATIONALITY

of the current condemnation was so trenchant as well as plausible, and through the years lent itself so conveniently to the instinct of touchy colonials to throw upon British officials all the onus possible for the difficulties incidental to the rapid growth of the colonies, that for a long while it was taken too nearly at its face value.

On questions of government the Colonial Office was under fire both from English Radicals and from reformers in the colonies. Agitators for the grant of representative legislatures to New South Wales and the Cape of Good Hope, as well as those dissatisfied with the existing representative system in British North America, were alike in blaming the Colonial Office for the failure at once to satisfy demands for larger self-government. Stephen and his fellows were in fact less reluctant than their critics believed to envisage eventual colonial self-government, but they had few illusions as to either the disinterestedness or the statesmanship of colonial politicians. In view of the particularism and self-seeking of many colonials who sought their ears it is not surprising if they long questioned whether the time had yet come to transfer more power and responsibility overseas.

Difficulties over constitutional matters became most acute and first brought radical changes in the British North American provinces, which were the furthest developed socially as well as politically and were influenced by the ever-present example of the democratic experiment in the neighboring Republic. Possibilities of friction were latent in the system inherited in each of these colonies from the eighteenth century. The governor, appointed by the Colonial Office, and his ex-

ecutive council, comprising his own nominees, were independent of the legislature, while the legislative council, also nominated by the governor, was able, as the upper chamber of the legislature, to curb the elected assembly.<sup>1</sup> In the latter the popular will could find voice, but preponderant power lay with governor and councils. Had the assemblies possessed sufficient control over finances they might have used the power of the purse to compel deference to their wishes, but while they could obstruct and hamper government they were too weak to control it.

The smallness of the early communities and the concentration of the first pioneers upon the problem of mere existence, then shortly the challenge of the War of 1812, postponed serious friction for some years after the setting up of representative assemblies. But the war also entrenched the provincial leaders more firmly in a monopoly of public office and a favored economic and social position. Forming the so-called "family compacts," administering the land system in their own interest, reaping profits from their virtual monopoly of the export and import trade and of the financial resources of the community, monopolizing also public office, entrenched in the upper house of the legislature, and mostly adherents of the official church, these privileged oligarchies incurred growing illwill as well as opposition, all the sharper when they put on aristocratic airs that were sometimes less in keeping with the quality of their cultivation than with their pretensions. The masses believed themselves unjustly exploited and their local rulers unworthy of the confi-

<sup>1</sup> In several provinces one council performed both executive and legislative functions.

dence shown in them by governor after governor, who took for granted their superior loyalty, accepted their advice, and relied upon their services. Everywhere these oligarchies were obviously dependent in large measure for their privileged position upon the support of British authority. Through the governor it was possible to shelve responsibility for unpopular features of government upon the distant and impersonal authority in Downing Street. The governor, moreover, found the obligation to keep his distant superiors fully informed and to wait for and defer to their directions an obstacle in the way of sound administration and a source of difficulties alike with his councilors and with the assembly. Radical changes were needed to adapt the system to growing communities in a new age.

Controversy was bitter and prolonged. In Lower Canada, where the French majority dominated the assembly while the English minority monopolized the councils and controlled commerce, the issue was intensified in peculiar ways by racial, linguistic and religious antagonisms. In Upper Canada the influence of those settlers of recent American antecedents who maintained active religious and other connections with society in the United States made it possible to stigmatize agitation as a product of pernicious and republican democracy. In Nova Scotia the dominance of a Halifax oligarchy made wealthy by the wars intensified the constitutional issue without injecting into it either racial or "republican" catchwords.

1 Little rebellions were staged in the two Canadas in 1837 by the agitators Mackenzie and Papineau. They were stamped out with comparative ease, for most of the people, however eager for political reform, were

loyal to the British connection and opposed to the sympathies of the leaders of revolt with republican institutions and their avowed hope of American assistance. Nevertheless, the crisis focused upon the problem of colonial government more British attention than it had received since the American Revolution. Irresponsible critics of the Government suggested that the troublesome colonies might well be cut loose, but the loyalty of the colonial majority precluded serious consideration of such a solution of the problem no matter how otherwise insoluble it might threaten to be.

#### THE DURHAM MISSION AND REPORT

By the late 'thirties conditions had altered greatly since the eighteenth century failure to reconcile a united empire with colonial aspirations towards self-government. It was a different England from that in which George III and an aristocratic oligarchy had dominated policy. The first of the great Reform Acts had recently (1832) set England on the road to democratization of her political system at home. Theories of colonial empire, too, were changing. Trade with the United States had prospered as greatly, it seemed, as it could have done had they remained under British control. Were the trouble and expense of keeping in subjection overseas English communities either necessary or worth while, even supposing it could be permanently accomplished, which by this time many were doubting. Such ideas were fermenting in the new middle-class England which had now to face afresh the fundamental question of the political relationship between English communities at home and overseas.

The British Government recognized that the crisis called for exceptional measures, and accordingly gave special authority to the new governor whom they sent out to cope with the emergency created by rebellion and to make recommendations for the future government of the North American provinces. The Earl of Durham, chosen for the post, was the leading aristocratic Radical of his day. In the Whig Ministry of Earl Grey, his father-in-law, he had played a leading part in preparing the Reform Bill of 1832. His continued and consistent radicalism, allied with his personal qualities, made him by the later 'thirties, despite poor health and serious disabilities of temper, the hope of those who sought further parliamentary reform, while he became an object of jealousy to leading Whigs and a source of embarrassment rather than strength to the Melbourne Government. The Canadian crisis offered the latter an opportunity to put him for a time at a safe distance, while entrusting him with a mission the importance of which would placate the factious Radicals. The Canadian post had, indeed, been offered him shortly prior to the Rebellion crisis, but he had declined it because he was interested primarily in public life in England. Hitherto, though he had lent his name to projects for settling New Zealand, he had not given much attention to the political problems of the overseas Empire. The crisis in Canada aroused his interest; here was a task worthy of his best powers. His acceptance meant that for the first time a colonial governorship was entrusted to a man of cabinet rank at home.

Durham was in Canada only a few months, returning to England when the Melbourne Government, bow-



ing to his enemies' criticism of his use of arbitrary authority, by which he hoped to combine conciliation with justice and so speed the pacification of the provinces, refused to support his conduct. He resigned his office and sailed home disappointed and sore at heart, but he completed the study of the problem set him and early in 1839 he submitted a *Report* which, although of very uneven quality both in its account of contemporary conditions and in its proposals, remains an outstanding document in the history of colonial government.

He would have liked to see a political union of all the provinces but reluctantly recognized its immediate impracticability, recommending instead the union of the two Canadas into a single province, not, indeed, as a step preliminary to a larger union so much as a means of subordinating the French to the English element and insuring, as he trusted it would, the absorption of the former. For he had been deeply disturbed to find "two nations warring within the bosom of a single state" and saw no hope of ending the strife till the two cultural groups should become one. His desire for the absorption of the French community ran counter to the recognition of their rights as a racial and religious minority which had been fundamental in the early handling of the French-Canadian problem. It turned out to be as impracticable as it was inconsistent with that early attitude. Union did not prove a means of assimilating the French nor did it place them in permanent subordination, but it did open the way to their political reconciliation, for they shortly found that their weight in the united legislature insured the

permanence of their influence and the preservation of their distinctive culture.

The most significant and fruitful of his recommendations was for the adoption of the principle that administration should be carried on through ministers having the confidence of the legislature, as it was conducted in the United Kingdom by ministers having the confidence of Parliament. Ministerial responsibility to the assembly was the means by which to secure the smooth and effective operation of government and insure the continued satisfaction and loyalty of Her Majesty's subjects. For his ideas on this question Durham was indebted in large measure to Reformers in the colonies, though not to those who had promoted or participated in the Rebellion. The most violent provincial agitators for reform were more obsessed by the grievances that they sought to abolish than endowed with clear and practicable ideas for changes in government which would effectively remove them. Such men precipitated the crisis, but others found the way out.

The man in the Canadas who most clearly realized that the crux of the problem was the control of the executive, and most definitely knew what remedy he wanted, and whose view proved closest to the solution adopted, was Robert Baldwin of Upper Canada. He grasped and enunciated clearly the nature and implications in colonial politics of what came to be called Responsible Government and this he demanded for his province. He claimed it his right as a British subject to be governed according to the principles of the British constitution, by which, he explained, he meant that those who conducted the administration of government in the province should be constantly dependent



for the tenure of their offices upon the support of a majority in the elected assembly. He did not suggest that the technical method of their appointment by the Crown to the headship of their departments and to membership in the executive council should be altered or done away with. Such change was no more necessary than in the United Kingdom, where the ministers were still, as they are to-day, technically the appointees of the Crown, holding office at the pleasure of the sovereign. It had become a convention of the British constitution that a ministry must, to retain office, have the support of a majority in the House of Commons, so the ministers in the colony, though still appointed technically by the governor, should nevertheless be considered definitely as really responsible to the assembly for the conduct of affairs and dependent upon its support for continuance in office. Hardly less deserving of fame than Baldwin as an exponent and champion of Responsible Government was Joseph Howe of Nova Scotia, but Durham came little under the latter's influence for his own time and attention were chiefly taken up with affairs in the Canadas.

When Durham recommended a position for colonial ministers analogous to that of cabinet ministers in the United Kingdom, he spoke as one with personal experience as a member of the British cabinet. Yet it should be noted that he neither recommended nor apparently foresaw so wide an interpretation and application of the principle of Responsible Government in the colonies as later events proved to follow naturally from its acceptance. He believed, and so stated, that the British Government must reserve control of imperial questions, that is, of foreign relations, trade with other parts

of the Empire as well as foreign countries, the disposal of public lands, and the form of government. Nor, probably, did he mean to propose that the ministers should be collectively responsible for policy in general. The governor, seemingly, would still exercise a genuinely coördinating function in relation to general policy as well as control those matters which were of special imperial concern.

In this connection it is important to remember that cabinet government in Britain itself was then neither so highly developed nor so thoroughly understood as it later became. The cabinet was still conceived to be dependent in appreciable measure upon the good will of the monarch and amenable to royal influence. Although the royal veto upon legislation had not been formally exercised since Queen Anne's reign, ministerial plans had been altered and even rendered abortive by the king's opposition as late as the reign of William IV, and his successor Victoria was able, in her early years, to influence materially the operation of cabinet responsibility. Couple this fact with a recognition that the colonial societies to which Durham's recommendations were meant to be applied were then as essentially provincial in the character of their life as they were small and isolated, and were as yet in no sense really national, and Durham's proposal becomes remarkable not for its narrowness but for its scope.

Some of his Radical friends were won to his views promptly, but apart from them nobody outside of the colonies found conceivable, for some time, the practicability of Responsible Government unless both colonial status and imperial connection were to be frankly abandoned. Moreover, if the rebellions, by compelling

action as well as inquiry into policy, had indirectly led to Durham's advocacy of Responsible Government, it is equally true that they had caused sharper doubts in the minds of Lord John Russell and many others as to its feasibility. A reform which might have come in the ordinary course, first in the Maritime Provinces, then in Canada, and some day in Australasia and South Africa, became dubious if not repugnant now that the advocacy of self-government was so liable to be associated not only by its enemies but by its friends with disloyalty and revolt.

Durham was a combination of imperialist and democrat. He stands out, indeed, as the first British statesman in the nineteenth century who displayed a profound faith that the permanence of the British connection, in the case of colonies with a large white population, was possible as well as desirable. He was like Burke in believing that the permanence would be best insured by enlarging the political rights of their people, but he went beyond Burke in advocating the extension of the principles of responsible cabinet government to colonies as the most effective means of extending to them British rights and thereby eliminating causes of friction and cementing their British loyalty.

While he might properly be called a liberal-imperialist, Durham was also an advocate of colonial nationalism. He avowed openly a hope for that larger day when the people of the separate provinces should find a wider life and a common loyalty in a new and inclusive nationality which should off-set the preponderance of the United States on the North American continent. In combining faith in the Empire with a belief in the desirability of such a national development within its

bounds, and in looking for the reconciliation of the imperial and national ideals by an extension to the colonies of the peculiar principles of English parliamentary government, and especially in advancing these ideas at a critical time and in clear and emphatic fashion, Durham earned a place as a major prophet, if not one of the master builders, of the British Empire-Commonwealth.

#### RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT ACHIEVED

The British Government soon carried into effect part of the recommendations of the *Report*, by uniting the two Canadas into a single province with a common legislature. The Act of Union contained no allusion to Responsible Government. It was not, indeed, the kind of change that could most suitably be embodied in formal enactment. The British cabinet itself was the product of changing practices, informal adaptations of old devices to new conditions and new ends rather than the result of formal constitution making or legislative enactment. Its consequent flexibility was one secret of its continued and growing usefulness. From its very nature formal legislation would not be required to introduce it into colonial government. In fact, however, it was not yet the intention of the British Government to introduce it by any means whatever, even with the limitations indicated by Lord Durham.

— Yet this much was now accepted as a necessary working principle: that there must be harmony between the executive council and the legislature. The instructions given by the Colonial Secretary, Lord John

Russell, to Poulett Thomson, who left a cabinet post in Britain to succeed Durham as Governor General, made this quite clear. Russell and his colleagues were still unable, however, to accept the view that permanent harmony would require the recognition of the assembly's control over the personnel and the policy of the administration, or to admit that such responsibility of ministers to a colonial assembly was compatible with the imperial connection. Events of the following years were to prove them mistaken, although meanwhile there were occasions, both in Canada and in Nova Scotia, when governors, by assuming active partisan rôles, were able, with the backing of the Colonial Office, to maintain their favorites in power for a time. Their partisan activity, however, hastened the growth of clear-cut parties and thus prepared the local situations all the more solidly for the time when the government might be transferred to a victorious and competent party welded by the adversities of opposition. It was fortunate for the future of British governors in these provinces that their rôle of partisan leaders in local politics was shortly terminated.

During this period when events were moving towards Responsible Government, though most men still could not believe it feasible, there was in progress a revolution in British fiscal policy which had profound bearing upon the question of colonial government. Britain had now so outdistanced other countries in the output of the new factory industry that she was becoming less concerned to preserve protected markets within the Empire than to diminish the costs of production and open fresh markets abroad. As early as the 1820's the process had begun of meeting these ends by lower-

ing the old restrictions on trade, and the movement towards free trade, once started, was accelerated by the continued expansion of industry and the acquisition of larger political power by the industrial and commercial middle classes. The adoption of free trade, sealed by the repeal of the Corn Laws by Peel's Tory Government in 1846, "demolished the very base on which the Empire had in the past been built." It meant abandoning alike the old imperial regulation of colonial trade by means of restrictive tariffs and its fostering by fiscal preferences. It quickened the growth of indifference among British statesmen and the British public concerning the political destiny of colonies. Were they worth trouble and expense if their possession was no longer to be of any special commercial advantage? There resulted wider and readier acquiescence among the people of the mother country in the establishment and growth of Responsible Government in the colonies than would have been likely under a continuance of the mercantilist view of empire.

The Whigs returned to power in 1846 under the leadership of Lord John Russell, whose views of colonial matters had grown and altered since his days at the Colonial Office. He had as his Colonial Secretary for the next six years the third Earl Grey, who, as Lord Howick, had been parliamentary under-secretary of that department in his father's Ministry at the beginning of the previous decade. Grey believed that the Empire was worth preserving for the sake both of Britain and her colonies, and he held that its unity was consistent with the growing freedom of colonial communities, while he insisted that its obligations entailed responsibilities of trusteeship towards its back-



ward races and the settlers of the future. His unwillingness to apply promptly and in all parts of the Empire, particularly in Australasia, all the theories of the colonial reformers incurred bitter attacks, but his régime saw the fundamental revolution in colonial policy in the concession of the principle of Responsible Government.

Grey issued instructions in 1846 that were intended to inaugurate the practice of Responsible Government in British North America. But actual application and vindication of the principle as a workable system required some time. The chief obstacles now to be surmounted were those created by local faction. There were still colonial groups whose official and financial interests were bound up with the maintenance of the old system. These provincial oligarchies, with their long-established vested interest in government, could hardly be expected to view with favor even the partial withdrawal of that British official hand which had so valuably upheld their own, and it was natural that they should still insist that no other local groups deserved the confidence of governors and Colonial Office or had any right to exercise authority.

The Conservative Government of Nova Scotia pleaded with the Colonial Secretary to declare authoritatively in favor of that old order which they insisted was alone appropriate to their province. Grey referred them to the people for the verdict. A provincial election in 1847 gave the Reformers a clear majority in the assembly, and when it met after the New Year a formal vote of want of confidence unseated the old ministers and established in their places a responsible cabinet drawn from the leaders of the old Oppo-

sition. As in the later 'thirties so now in the later 'forties passions ran higher in Canada and the violence of events there gave to them a notoriety that did not attach to the more tranquil developments in the smaller provinces. Many of the old governing party in Canada were drawn into the awkward position of demonstrating their monopoly of loyalty and upholding their superior right to power by resorting to openly disloyal talk and indulging in acts of violence. Unwittingly they gave occasion for the vindication of the new principle in a manner that was as striking as it was unmistakable in its implications.

- The chief part in this act of the drama was played by the governor, the Earl of Elgin. He had already proven his abilities in the difficult rôle of Jamaica's governor, and had been intended for the Canadian post by the late Conservative Government. Grey found the selection quite to his liking. In the interval before sailing for Canada Elgin increased the aptness of his appointment by marrying his chief's niece, the eldest daughter of the late Earl of Durham.

The first election in the Province of Canada after he took office resulted in victory for the Reformers. He promptly summoned the Reform leaders in the two sections of the province, Baldwin and Lafontaine, to form a ministry. Their legislative program included a measure for recouping loyal persons in Lower Canada who had suffered losses of property through the rebellion of the previous decade. The Opposition, who while in office had been planning a similar measure, charged that this Rebellion Losses Bill would result in officially rewarding rebels and demanded that the governor should withhold his formal assent to a meas-



ure so "disloyal." But Elgin had a high sense of his constitutional obligation to accept the advice of his properly constituted advisers on matters not involving imperial policy or interests, and he refused to be intimidated by the violence of a Tory mob, though it was displayed not only by burning the Parliament Building at Montreal but by pelting his person with dangerous as well as unsavory missiles. He kept his temper, did his duty as he saw it, and weathered the storm.

Commercial conditions help to account for the disloyal professions and conduct displayed in 1849 by an avowedly ultra-loyalist faction. Canada was suffering from financial depression, which the local business community, particularly in Montreal, ascribed chiefly to Britain's recent abandonment of the policy of preferences to colonial trade. For years some Canadian Tories had found it easy to talk of separation from Britain whenever it seemed that the connection might interfere with their own local power or their own local interests. Now discouragement at the withdrawal of British fiscal favors, coincident with the governor's seeming support of "rebels," made them ready to take at their face value the recent loose statements of many English public men to the effect that the sooner the colonies were set adrift the better. Many signers of the Annexation Proclamation which was drawn up at Montreal in 1849, advocating annexation to the United States, supported the proposal as a counsel of despair. Their sympathy with it was as short-lived as the acute economic depression, which was soon alleviated when the ports of the St. Lawrence were opened to foreign shipping by the repeal of the remnants of the old Navi-

gation Acts, and before long disappeared in the face of an influx of British capital and a general improvement in world markets. Elgin, also, did his utmost to demonstrate the inconsistency of the view that only by annexation to the United States could greater trade facilities with that country be secured when he set about, with British approval, preparing the way for a treaty of commercial reciprocity that was consummated five years later. More speedily he corrected any misapprehension as to the British view of the annexation agitation when he sanctioned, with the approval of the Home Government, the dismissal of all officeholders who had signed the subversive manifesto. He urged, moreover, upon the British Government that responsible statesmen in the mother country should cease discouraging colonial loyalty by talking of eventual separation as if it were natural and inevitable.

At this juncture in Canada a governor of weaker fiber than Elgin, or more hasty temper, or less sure in his grasp of the principles at stake, might easily have followed a course that would have postponed for years the successful inauguration and vindication of Responsible Government which stand to his credit, or might easily have provoked a more violent crisis, which must not only have delayed progress in Canada but must also have reacted adversely upon the more hopeful situation in Nova Scotia. By his persistent refusal to withdraw support from either the men or the measures of the Reform Government which were so obnoxious to the disgruntled would-be monopolists of loyalty, of place, and of power he throttled reaction and cleared the way for continued progress. He bided his time till the whirligig of politics should enable him to demon-

strate his equal readiness to accept and support ministers of Conservative color when such were desired by a new assembly, meanwhile bending his energies, in coöperation with any ministry with which fortune should visit him, to secure the stability and the prosperity of the province as a part of the Empire.

The disloyalty cry might still be raised at elections, but politicians and electorate alike would know at the bottoms of their hearts how specious it had become as a partisan catchword on the lips of one-time avowed annexationists. It could not now be long till every one would recognize not only the possibility but the existence of diverse parties, alike loyal and constitutional whether in office or in opposition and recognized by all concerned as competent and certain to have frequent innings in both rôles. With this full and recognized advent of parties in the constitutional British sense, the essence of Responsible Government, already proclaimed, would be firmly established.

In Britain, too, Elgin's acceptance of the Rebellion Losses Bill put the principle of Responsible Government to the test. His action was roundly criticized in both houses of Parliament as derogatory to imperial prestige but Russell and Grey and their colleagues loyally supported him and the adverse motions were defeated. Thus in Britain as well as overseas the principle of Responsible Government in a colony stood vindicated for all to see.

The new colonial autonomy, out of which has since grown the dominion status of to-day, was in line with the theories and contentions of American Revolutionary leaders in its essence if not in the manner of its application. Their vindication of the principle of self-

government for British peoples overseas had no doubt been a factor in increasing British willingness to admit Responsible Government, whether looked upon as a means of avoiding disruption or insuring amicable separation. On the other hand, for a long time the Revolution had been followed by a conservative reaction in British colonial policy and had led to the association of Loyalism with official privilege in the colonies, thus augmenting the obstacles in the path of colonial home rule. Through Durham and Elgin the new Empire had at length inherited the legacy of Burke, an Empire preserved by the principle of local liberty. That the will was so long in probate may not unfairly be charged in part to the Empire's debit account against the American Revolution.

There is this, however, to be added. Had colonial control of the executive been effected much earlier than the middle of the nineteenth century, supposing political progress in Britain and the colonies to have made that possible, it is not unlikely that the method adopted might have been of the American rather than the British type. The constitution builders of the United States in the eighteenth century did not understand what was going to happen to the English cabinet system, and neither did their English contemporaries. The postponement of colonial control of colonial executives for so long made it natural when it came to establish relationships between legislatures and cabinets in the colonies similar to that which was now so thoroughly understood in Britain. There was thus made possible among the autonomous governments of the Empire as they arose a degree of unity of type both in form and in practice which made im-

measurably easier the continued community of their political life. They are to-day more truly a Commonwealth, as they are now so often called, because the same basic principle of Responsible Government underlies their several political systems. Because colonial self-government developed in accordance with the traditions of British cabinet government it is possible now for ministers from the far corners of the British world to speak, with a mutual appreciation of what the term means, of His Majesty's Governments in Great Britain and in each of the Dominions, and, with the fullest understanding of one another's responsible relations to their several parliaments, to take counsel together in their common interest.

#### RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT EXTENDED AND ENLARGED

Responsible Government was soon extended beyond the North American colonies.<sup>1</sup> Demands for its application elsewhere had been frequent and vociferous since the appearance of the *Durham Report*, but even after Elgin's vindication of the new principle they were not at once all granted. In an empire whose parts were so diverse and so rapidly growing and changing, entire uniformity of policy was impossible, though events in one part often had far-reaching influence in others. In many instances the issue of executive responsibility became somewhat confused with the simpler question of legislative representation, being brought up before the latter had been settled.

<sup>1</sup> Following its application to Nova Scotia and Canada, it became operative in New Brunswick in 1848, in Prince Edward Island in 1851, and in Newfoundland in 1855.

New South Wales had been given in 1842 a legislative council two-thirds elective, but dissatisfaction with this incomplete representation soon reached formidable proportions, while the newer Australian communities were also clamoring for representative government. Earl Grey at the Colonial Office gave much attention to Australian problems, but Australian opinion was blinded to the liberal aspects of his policy by his insistence that imperial control of land and land revenue must be maintained in the interest of future settlers, and by his reluctance entirely to abandon convict transportation even where the feeling against it had now become strong. Moreover, his far-seeing advocacy of some degree of federalism to make possible a unified handling of common Australian problems offended deep-rooted local prejudices. In 1850, however, provision was made for rapid advance when Parliament authorized the setting up in Victoria, South Australia, and Van Diemen's Land of legislative councils similar to that of New South Wales and empowered these bodies to alter the electoral laws and establish two-chamber legislatures.

The discovery of gold in New South Wales and Victoria in 1851 speeded up political as well as economic developments. Gold now supplemented wool as the basis of economic security and growth. Population and wealth increased rapidly. Colonial remonstrances against the restraints of imperial control carried correspondingly more effective weight. Grey was hardly in office long enough to see the full logic of these rapid events, but before the end of 1852 a new Colonial Secretary conceded the desirability of transferring lands



and land revenue to colonial control when the new political constitutions should have been devised, and at the same time announced the cessation of transportation to Van Diemen's Land. In a few months the British Government was definitely forecasting the recognition of Responsible Government and it came into being after the establishment of the anticipated bicameral legislatures in 1855 and 1856.<sup>1</sup>

In New Zealand, although representative government was authorized by an act of 1846, its operation was suspended in accordance with the views of the governor, Sir George Grey, who believed that the system proposed was not well suited to the actual situation. White settlement was limited to a small number of isolated and sparsely populated areas. Relations among these, together with questions of land and native policy, were strenuously discussed during the following years till in 1852 Parliament passed a Constitution Act. This took into account the geographical isolation of the several centers of settlement and the individuality arising from the varied circumstances of their founding, and provided a quasi-federal system under which elective provincial governments with municipal powers were set up alongside the representative legislature provided for the whole colony. The convening of the first legislature in 1854 precipitated a local controversy over the advisability of securing Responsible Government, but the British Government of-

<sup>1</sup> In New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania (the former Van Diemen's Land). West Australia, to which there was transportation from 1849 to 1868, developed politically more slowly. It was given a representative council in 1870 and attained Responsible Government in 1890. Queensland was given full political institutions upon its separation from New South Wales in 1859.

ferred no objection to its establishment and it went into effect in 1855.

Political questions in South Africa continued to be most seriously affected by racial difficulties. Despite progress in settlement during the decades following the Great Trek, the political destiny of the country as a whole was kept in uncertainty by old jealousies and new frictions between Briton and Boer. British policy showed deplorable oscillations of purpose, swinging between the humanitarian ideal of trusteeship for the welfare of the natives and for the South Africa of the future on the one hand, which involved the acceptance of imperial responsibility, and on the other the *laissez-faire* ideal which, in the name of self-government and economy, involved an abandonment of imperial responsibility alike for government and defense.

In Cape Colony, where symptoms of republicanism had appeared even under Dutch rule in the eighteenth century, demands for representative government that became insistent in the 1840's were considered with favor during Earl Grey's régime and were met at length by inaugurating in 1854 a liberal representative system. But while both Houses of the new legislature passed resolutions in 1855 favoring the further step of Responsible Government, the British Government felt that matters could not be rushed so fast with advantage to the colonists or safety to the natives. In the colony itself the proposal encountered no little opposition, kept alive partly by reluctance to assume the larger burdens that Responsible Government would entail, especially of local defense, and partly by fear of Dutch preponderance on the part of some of the English inhabitants. This opposition diminished as



voters and politicians gained political experience. The incipient hostility of the emigrant Boer communities beyond the northern frontier was also a factor in delaying the grant of Responsible Government. Finally, in 1872, a renewed request from the legislature was granted.

Natal, after being a dependency of the Cape for some years, became a separate colony in 1856 with a legislative council most of whose members were elected. Here the realization of Responsible Government was postponed by a variety of factors. The native problem was peculiarly complex in a colony where blacks outnumbered whites more than tenfold and also were formidable neighbors on the northeast and on the southwest.<sup>1</sup> The consequent difficulties in connection with defense and relations with the other white communities all operated, along with the political inexperience of the inhabitants, to make full home rule as inexpedient as it was impracticable. As the white population increased and local experience grew it became more feasible to find a middle way in all these matters between the views of the colonials and the policies of the Home Government, and in 1893 a large measure of Responsible Government was inaugurated.

If the initial acceptance of the principle of Responsible Government in one section of the Empire necessarily involved its application in other similar regions, it is no less true that its recognition with respect to certain parts of the sphere of government involved its extension to other subjects that were not at first conceived to lie within the scope of its operation. The

<sup>1</sup> The growth of a considerable Indian population brought attendant complications.

Durham ideal and the Elgin-Grey type of Responsible Government were essentially transitional even though they embodied the fundamental principle. Virtual local control of the details of constitution making was conceded in the very methods used to establish representative government in Australia and South Africa by invoking colonial coöperation in that accomplishment, and the power of local legislatures to alter their constitutions was expressly confirmed by the Colonial Laws Validity Act (1865).<sup>1</sup> Imperial control of lands had ceased in British North America by the time Responsible Government was realized, and elsewhere its surrender was recognized as involved in the grant of Responsible Government. In view of the close connection between land policy and immigration, it is not surprising that the colonies made good their claim that control of the latter also was a proper part of their autonomy.<sup>2</sup>

It was with reluctance that many British statesmen thought of turning over to colonials the control of policy towards native races, but before long this also was deemed a natural corollary of Responsible Government. The relatively small and widely dispersed native populations in British North America and in Australia made the question there of comparatively little moment. The Maoris of New Zealand in 1852 outnumbered the white settlers almost four to one, but in course of time immigration so increased the white

<sup>1</sup> This act also provided that a colonial law was void if repugnant to an act of the British Parliament extending to the colony to which such law related.

<sup>2</sup> Asiatic immigration, however, was in some instances under British control till much later.

population as to make it ninety-five per cent of the total.<sup>1</sup> In South Africa the intensity and the permanence of the native question as a major problem were made certain by the virility as well as the numbers of the black races inhabiting that country. Bantu tribes such as the Kaffirs, Zulus, and Basutos, which had come down from the north early in the century, had partly exterminated the less vigorous aborigines and proved themselves quite ready to come to grips with their white rivals for ascendancy in the regions north and east of Cape Colony which their depredations had almost completely depopulated.<sup>2</sup> But the principle of local control and responsibility was recognized to be involved when Responsible Government was established there for the white colonists. It could hardly have been otherwise when the British Government had recognized the claims of the neighboring Boer republics to control their native policy and acquiesced in their establishing native reserves.<sup>3</sup>

In Jamaica and other tropical colonies with a large emancipated population whose forefathers had been imported from Africa the situation was different. These people were without tribal or other organization of their own. Legislatures representing the planting class which had formerly owned them were unable to satisfy them and unwilling to let them share political power lest they gain a control which they were lamenta-

<sup>1</sup> Britain retained control of the Maoris till 1865.

<sup>2</sup> It was into regions made available for fresh settlement by these depopulations of the 1820's that the Boers who trekked from Cape Colony mostly moved.

<sup>3</sup> The Orange Free State acquired native reserves between 1853 and 1869. Zululand, annexed in 1887, was in 1897, with Tongaland, handed over to Natal, which had recently been given Responsible Government.

bly unfitted to wield. In Jamaica a Negro insurrection in 1865 brought a crisis. The white inhabitants gave up their representative assembly, which they had possessed since 1664, rather than see the untutored children of slaves secure effective political power. Similarly other West Indian colonies lost their partial self-government, despite the fact that elsewhere in the Empire it was being extended. They became strictly "Crown Colonies" governed from Downing Street.

It was not till 1860 that the last vestiges of the commercial restrictions of the old colonial system were abolished, but a full decade before that event apostles of free trade in England were envisaging a free trade Empire. Responsible Government played havoc with this ideal. Even under the old system colonies had sometimes tried to stretch their locally made revenue duties into retaliatory or preferential tariffs and thus encroach on the tariff-making preserves of the imperial government. That colonies might have fiscal policies independent of the mother country's was implicit in the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 governing trade between British North America and the United States. When Canada, towards the end of the same decade, adopted a frankly protective tariff, the British Colonial Secretary, incited by injured British manufacturers, expostulated against this violation of free trade dogma, but he was compelled in the end to admit the validity of the Canadian contention that unless Britain were prepared again to assume responsibility for administering Canadian affairs the colonial government and legislature must have a free hand in controlling their commerce as well as raising their revenues by such tariff measures as they saw fit. Self-government meant fiscal

autonomy, even to the extent of freedom to repudiate free trade.

Meanwhile control passed to colonial governments in one minor matter after another, such as copyright, postal service, currency. Transfers of this sort continued intermittently in later years, sometimes on the initiative of the imperial government, sometimes of the colonial. The reservation of the right on the part of the British Government to intervene, by disallowance of legislation or otherwise, in colonial measures, remained a reality, but in practice it was gradually transformed into little more than the power to admonish and advise. Imperial confirmation of the appointment of colonial office-holders under responsible governments was discontinued as early as 1862. Already by that date the rôle of a governor sent out from Britain, while it remained important, was becoming one of serving rather as a constitutional link between colony and empire and as titular head of his government than as agent of an imperial supremacy.

Rapid as was the enlargement of the scope of self-government, there were matters in which for a long time imperial responsibility and therefore imperial control remained extensive, namely, defense and foreign relations. This is accounted for as much by colonial opinion as by British. While it was generally recognized that a variety of civil expenditures in the colonies which Britain had borne in the past should properly be shouldered by the colonial tax-payer as part of the price of Responsible Government, there was generally little readiness in the colonies to admit any large obligation for defense. The imperial government's con-

tention that it could hardly be expected to carry the burden of defending colonies which had now been granted self-government and freedom from imperial fiscal and commercial restrictions bore fruit only gradually. In some colonies the defensive works and military establishments were so extensive and of such a nature as to involve expenses that seemed to colonial eyes quite properly imperial rather than local. If British foreign policy was to involve the whole Empire in war willy-nilly, should not most at least of the burden properly fall on the tax-payers of Britain whose government controlled that policy? Colonial communities which profited financially from the presence of British garrisons were not eager to see them replaced by defenders who must instead be a burden upon local tax-payers. And there was a social *éclat* in the society of imperial officers not to be quickly replaced were their presence withdrawn.

By 1850 Earl Grey was seeking to reduce the imperial troops in the colonies and to induce the colonial governments to assume a share of the financial burden. By the end of the decade the British troops had been materially reduced in Australia and in Canada and defense partly provided for by volunteer forces organized and financed locally. For the 'fifties the colonies as a whole contributed, however, only about one-tenth of the cost of their military defense, while of course the whole cost of naval defense was borne by the mother country. In 1862 the House of Commons came to the conclusion, after considerable inquiry and discussion, "that Colonies exercising the rights of self-government ought to undertake the main responsibility



of providing for their own internal order and security, and ought to assist in their own external defense.”

Before the 'sixties ended there were no imperial troops in Australia, where colonial self-defense had now become the established policy, with the cordial assent of the inhabitants, who, with no near neighbors, could afford to feel secure while the British navy controlled the seas. Conditions were different in British North America and South Africa. In the former the perils entailed by strained relations during the American Civil War and the Fenian threats that followed it made reduction inexpedient till after the formation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867. From 1871, however, there were British troops only at Halifax and Esquimalt, from which they were not withdrawn till 1906, following a Canadian offer to assume the garrisoning of these two seaports as well as the posts which had long been manned by Canadian forces. In South Africa early efforts to reduce the garrisons were weakened by the fact that Responsible Government was not yet in effect there, and after 1872, when it became so in Cape Colony, almost continuous unrest and troubles of one sort or another prevented the complete withdrawal of imperial troops before the Great War of 1914.

Despite the wide assumption of local responsibility for the maintenance of ordinary local defenses, everywhere there was the wish to count on British aid in time of danger. More important than military succor, the prestige of Britain and her power on the seas were not to be lightly repudiated. If a continued measure of dependence upon the mother country for defense spelled a qualification of self-government and left the

final word in foreign affairs unquestionably in the hands of Great Britain, nevertheless for a long time the relationship involved, in colonial eyes, not a disparagement of freedom but rather its guarantee. It was no less acceptable than it was profitable.



## CHAPTER II

### NATIONAL UNIONS AND IMPERIALISM: THE RISE OF THE DAUGHTER NATIONS (1861- 1910)

#### BRITISH NORTH AMERICA UNITED

THE growth of nationalism in individual colonies had compelled the development of Responsible Government. This did not necessarily involve, however, the integration of groups of adjacent colonies to form larger national states. Indeed, the possibility of the existence of distinct colonial nationalities whether on large scale or small was at first discerned only by the few, for the many, particularly in the mother country, continued to talk as if the colonies were still parts of the English nation. Using the words nation and empire as synonyms, they remained blind to the extent and the significance of the growth of separate national consciousness in distant colonies.

The first group of colonies to be welded into a national state within the Empire was the North American, where geographical, historical, and external factors combined with the temporary exigencies of business and government to quicken the desire for political consolidation, and to lead the British Government not only to acquiesce in the movement for federation but aid in hastening its consummation. The Australian and South African colonies had to witness much growth

of settlement and considerable political evolution before a corresponding development was to prove feasible in those regions.<sup>1</sup>

The political union of British North America was occasionally forecast and discussed long before Responsible Government had been achieved. Lack of common interests and feeling, consequent upon the geographic separateness of the several colonies and the inadequacy of communications, stood in the way, no less than the immaturity of their political development. The British Government declined to entertain proposals for union as late as 1858 and 1859. These proposals were the outcome in part of difficulties in working the existing union of the two Canadas. After Responsible Government had become effective there, it was increasingly hampered by sectional and racial rivalries between Upper and Lower Canada with their respective English-speaking Protestant and French-speaking Roman Catholic majorities; indeed deadlock threatened. The separation of these two sections, and the creation of a federal system including other provinces as well, seemed to offer a way to give to each section real self-government in the matters that were its peculiar concern, while providing a single government for the management of their common interests.

This Canadian constitutional difficulty, however, was only one of the factors in bringing the question of federation to the fore. If the railways which had been built in each province in the 'fifties were to be linked

<sup>1</sup> In 1901 and 1910 respectively. In New Zealand, however, a measure of unification was accomplished in 1876, when the so-called provinces, whose separate governments had come to be as unnecessary as they were troublesome elaborations of the political machinery of the colony, were abolished.

into a system capable of competing with the railways of the United States as a route from the center of the continent to the Atlantic seaboard, and if the St. Lawrence Valley, closed to winter navigation, was to have a railway outlet to ice-free Atlantic ports over British soil, the railways of Canada and the Maritime Provinces must be connected across several hundred miles of sparsely settled territory. If the North-West was to be opened up to settlement with sufficient speed and in such manner as to prevent its being overrun by the expanding frontier of United States settlement and lost to the Empire, west and east must be more closely united. The economic connections between the St. Lawrence Basin and the West that had been established in early days by the fur trade were no longer sufficient. Political union and the establishment of a railway link were required.

It was argued that the settled provinces must first be politically united in order to form a government with sufficient prestige and power to assume such enlarged responsibilities and insure the credit and stability necessary for the accomplishment of these ends. London financiers with a heavy stake in the existing railways found it expedient to press in the provinces for intercolonial coöperation, and in England to purchase control of the old Hudson's Bay Company in order to insure its assent to projects for expanding western communications and settlement. Their political influence in England eventually counted for much in securing the support of the British Government and Parliament for the cause of union.

Not least among the circumstances that forced the pace and shaped developments towards union in Brit-

ish North America was the American Civil War, in which, during the first half of the 'sixties, the Northern States, adjacent to the British provinces, were fighting to a finish the slave-holding South and thwarting the latter's attempt at secession. The provinces felt the effects of the strained relations between the Northern States and Britain, which resulted in a hardly veiled hostility towards these neighboring imperial possessions. There was talk, more or less wild, of forcible annexation. It gave pretext and at least the color of validity to the admonitions of provincial leaders that in union strength should be sought to ward off impending aggression. After the war was over, a sense of insecurity was further stimulated by Fenian threats and border raids. The old repugnance towards the idea of annexation to the United States, shared by French and English in the provinces, could thus be appealed to with more than usual effectiveness by those who wished to enlist emotion in the federation cause. The Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 was abrogated by the American Congress at the earliest date possible under its terms, largely with the hope that the provinces would seek a substitute in still closer association with the Republic. Instead they turned to the improvement of intercolonial communications and the stimulation of intercolonial trade by the removal of tariff barriers and hastened the consummation of federal union.

The war also influenced the British Government to see in such federation a device that would lighten its own political and military responsibilities by substituting for several provincial governments with which its dealings were difficult and uncertain, a central government more dependable as well as better able to stand

on its own feet. Once the scheme had been shaped, Downing Street used all the influence at its command to overcome local opposition which for a time threatened the success of the movement, particularly in the Maritime Provinces. In the shaping of the project, undertaken on colonial initiative and carried through chiefly by the political leaders in the provinces, the example of the American federal system was not without important effects, particularly in stressing the need of ample powers for the central government, which were believed to be lacking in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The essential features of parliamentary and cabinet government of the British type were retained in the provinces and were also followed in the system of central government provided for the new Dominion of Canada.

The proposed federation received the endorsement of the British Parliament and the Dominion came into being on July 1, 1867, as a union of four eastern provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario). Three years later the North-West, which had been so long held for the Empire by the Hudson's Bay Company, was taken over, and in the following year British Columbia was admitted, with the promise that a Pacific Railway would soon be built. Prince Edward Island followed in 1873. The completion of the Intercolonial Railway in the east in 1876 and of the Canadian Pacific Railway to the west coast in 1885 established the transcontinental communications upon which the permanence as well as the inception of the union was conditioned.

The colonial leaders of this movement thought more

<sup>1</sup> Though in practice the provinces later succeeded in securing ampler powers than at first intended.

of integrating the interests of separate provinces than of enlarging the scope of autonomy. They anticipated that the latter would eventually increase as a result of federation, but most of them were intent rather upon insuring the preservation of the British connection as a safeguard of independence from the United States. They talked of a new Kingdom of Canada under the British Crown, but on the plea of a British statesman that "the republican susceptibilities of the Yankees" should not be needlessly offended the old term Dominion was applied to the new federal union. The term Kingdom would perhaps have implied a more fully self-governing status than was actually at once achieved and might thereby have hastened the processes of political evolution, but Dominion had a practical advantage in that its connotation was vague and there was thus opportunity for events to fill the term gradually with the new content which it has come to possess.

#### IMPERIAL SENTIMENT REVIVED

Despite the hope cherished by most Canadians at federation that the establishment of the Dominion of Canada would help to preserve the imperial connection, it was the belief of most Englishmen that it was a step towards complete separation, a prospect which seemed to many desirable as well as inevitable. For while Britain could no longer control these colonies in her own interest, their continuance in the Empire enlarged her military burden and was liable to jeopardize her international relations. Some political leaders boasted proudly that it was England's destiny to be the founder of states whose heritage of freedom meant,



as for the colonies of ancient Greece, political independence. There were others who would have liked to avoid separation but saw little possibility of so doing. In any case it was above all things to be hoped that if and when these communities left the Empire they should be in shape to govern themselves and should carry into future relations with the parent state the maximum of good will.

This sort of attitude reached a culmination in 1869, which promptly evoked vigorous expression of imperial sentiment and cogent arguments for the maintenance of the Empire. Prior to that date, to whatever degree statesmen may have seemed to acquiesce in the idea of eventual separation, they had always, in fact, proved themselves ready to pay a heavy price to preserve the imperial connection or if not to prevent, at least to postpone, its severance. No responsible minister had ventured to suggest thrusting a colony from the Empire against its will. Yet the new Gladstone Government now insisted on withdrawing troops from New Zealand despite that colony's current troubles with the Maoris, on the ground that the local conflict was the colony's own fault and that Britain had already more than met any obligations which might ever have been hers towards New Zealand. The Government was promptly charged with trying to cast New Zealand off. Its repudiation of the charge did not prevent vigorous discussion of the real issues involved. The apparent general indifference towards colonies gave way to a revival of outspoken belief in their importance, and the result was a widespread insistence that they be retained whatever the cost.

In this reversal of opinion it counted for much that

the public at last awoke to the strength of the colonial desire to remain within the Empire. Colonial loyalty demanded reciprocal loyalty from the mother country as well as maternal acquiescence in the growth of colonial autonomy. The colonial, while eager to govern himself, was no less eager to preserve a connection to which he was attached by bonds not merely of tradition but of compelling self-interest. He was sensitive to any sign of indifference towards the connection in the mother country. Expressions of willingness to see the colonies go, intended as polite gestures to insure good will at parting, were now seen to be defeating their own purpose by hurting the feelings of the colonial population. Separatist prophecies need not, apparently, be fulfilled after all. Good reasons were also now appearing why, in Britain's interest as well as that of the colonies, the connection was worth preserving.

The diminution of distance by the unprecedented development of communications helped at this time more strikingly than at any other, till the development of air travel, to antiquate separatist prophecies. Telegraphic cables to America (1866) and Australia (1871) and the increasing speed, certainty and cheapness of ocean transport that came with progress in building ships of iron and propelling them by steam-power, made it possible and convenient for distant parts of the Empire to keep in close touch. Political unity and a community of culture seemed practicable now where a few years ago they had appeared to be impossible of preservation in face of the obstacles raised by distance. On the other hand the new conditions exposed the colonies to easier attack; should they be abandoned they would



be less likely long to preserve their independence of other powers. Absorption by other states would probably render continued intercourse with them alike less easy and less profitable, and by increasing the aggressive strength of foreign rivals might jeopardize international peace. It was already being argued that the preservation of the political connection, however tenuous it might seem to be, among the scattered self-governing communities of the Empire, was valuable as a step towards world peace and the establishment of friendly coöperation among nations. At the same time the sense that Britain was bearing an undue burden of colonial defense had been lifted by the passing of the war scare in America and by the extensive withdrawals of troops from the colonies which had now been effected. The colonies were becoming populous and wealthy, and promised to be better able as time went on to assume such burdens for themselves. It was correspondingly easier to believe that their retention might be a benefit.

The extension of the franchise to industrial workers by the Reform Act of 1867 accounted in considerable measure for the new emphasis on colonial questions. A large proportion of the emigrants in the middle decades of the century had gone from this class. Cheap postage made easy the preservation of family intercourse across the seas. The new electorate was thus linked with the colonies by personal ties stronger than those of the business and manufacturing classes whose *laissez-faire* theories, based on their current economic interests, had dominated policy. In other ways, too, industrial workers were interested in colonial developments. For example, those English iron workers

who, in the first flush of their enjoyment of the widened franchise, were engaged in filling a large order for rails for the Intercolonial Railway that was then being built in the new Dominion of Canada found it natural to associate democracy, empire, and economic prosperity as congenial elements in their outlook as Englishmen. The interest of the new voters in the Empire was worth appealing to by party leaders.

But the commercial and manufacturing middle classes were also waking up to economic advantages to be derived from empire despite the passing of the old mercantilism. Expanding industry demanded expansion of overseas markets and overseas sources of raw materials and foodstuffs.<sup>1</sup> Industrial developments in western Europe and in the eastern United States, fostered by the general adoption of protective tariffs, were beginning to threaten England's monopoly as "the workshop of the world." The end of her primacy, should she stand alone, could already be discerned on the horizon. Doors might remain open in colonies which would probably be closed in foreign lands. Colonies might still be profitable, and the preservation of imperial ties advisable. Investment bankers with a heavy stake in colonial enterprise, and an ever-urgent need of favorable conditions for profitable investment, were among the earliest to deplore the habit of depreciating colonial loyalty and viewing complacently the prospect of the colonies leaving the Empire.

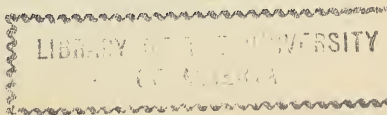
Thus there grew throughout large sections of the

<sup>1</sup> Free trade had involved the fostering of industry and commerce at the expense of home agriculture and the population of Britain had become largely dependent upon food supplies from overseas.

British public a fresh and vigorous sense of interdependence with the various overseas communities of the Empire, though not till the late 'seventies did the word "imperialism" become widely current. Many men of various political views, who prior to this time had followed the fashion of deprecating the importance or the use of colonies, began to advocate re-shaping the imperial structure to insure the continuance of the connection. The Royal Colonial Institute,<sup>1</sup> founded in 1868, was frankly non-partisan and attracted men of opposing parties. Shortly it came out strongly for the ideal of a "united Empire," which it continued thereafter to espouse, though the character of its membership precluded exclusive devotion to any particular program for attaining that end.

In 1872 Disraeli, who twenty years before had written "these wretched colonies will all be independent too in a few years, and are a mill-stone round our necks," now set out to capture the cause of imperialism for the Conservative party, and to fasten the stigma of anti-imperialism upon his opponents. Gladstonian loyalty to Liberal principles was imputed to be disloyalty to England because it involved willingness to leave in colonial hands the final determination of colonial destinies, and did not allow itself to be disturbed at the possibility of the result being separation. It is true that the Liberals had failed to appreciate the strength of colonial attachment to the Empire, but many of those Conservatives who now became enthusiastic imperialists failed equally to appreciate the strength of the growing feelings of colonial nationalism. In so far as Disraelian imperialism was an expression of assertive British nationalism,

<sup>1</sup> Its name was changed to Royal Empire Society in 1928.



with which, in fact, it shortly became associated, it tended to be couched in the language of bombast and aggression, and with regard to the existing self-governing colonies it stood for a desire to resume control over matters in which, it was now alleged, too large a measure of self-government had been carelessly or willfully allowed. Organized unity rather than liberty should be the primary aim. If the colonies found the imperial connection so valuable, they ought to be willing to moderate their pretensions to autonomy and fall in line with the policies of the mother country, particularly in fiscal affairs and imperial defense. Assumptions that the colonies could be persuaded to give up either the legislative or the financial powers that they had secured proved, however, to be erroneous.

#### SCHEMES OF EMPIRE UNIFICATION

The new imperial sentiment which at first laid stress chiefly on the importance of keeping the colonies, produced as time went on numerous proposals for the reorganization of the Empire in the direction of greater centralization. The suggestion, sometimes broached in earlier times, was repeated, that colonial representatives should be admitted to the British Parliament, thus making it truly imperial. But in view of the growth of Responsible Government in the colonies this proposal was no longer so applicable, and was less likely than ever to seem to colonial voters to justify control and taxation by a parliament in which their representatives would be a negligible minority. There were also schemes for securing to the Imperial Government the benefits of colonial advice on colonial matters. The

idea, however, which was most frequently and actively put forward in various guises was to unite the colonies with the mother country in some form of federal system. Federation was in the air. It had succeeded on a large scale in the United States, and was now successfully established also in Canada and in the German Empire. Those who thought that therefore it would be feasible for the British Empire overlooked or minimized, however, one essential difference between it and these other federal unions. Each of these three occupied a continuous stretch of territory. The population in each was capable of a single national interest and loyalty. The scattered sections of the British Empire were becoming distinct nationalities, and having once secured national political existence or set it up as a goal to be attained they were unlikely to surrender that ideal and assent to any reënlargement of imperial authority over them, in such matters as defense, taxation, and tariffs, which would be involved in any genuine federation of the Empire.

Imperial federation was not, however, the only alternative to separation, despite the claims of its proponents. A third road began to open more clearly, lying between these two, the path of free coöperation within the Empire by methods that would not lessen self-government but rather leave room for its further enlargement. Only occasionally, before the discussion of the Empire's future became so general in the 'seventies and 'eighties, had some writers envisaged the possibility of an equal and free partnership under a common Crown. To more and more minds, however, the changing conditions of the world were now suggesting the possibility of reconciling the ideals of colonial in-

dependence, espoused by those separatists whose model was the independent colony of the Greeks, with the desire of imperialists of various hues to preserve the imperial connection as a living relationship. But most Englishmen at home still tended towards one extreme view or the other, finding it difficult to effect the reconciliation of such apparently inconsistent ideas. Imperialists who succeeded in doing so were few and far between. From the middle 'eighties onwards, however, there was gradually increasing advocacy of seeking to preserve whatever was desirable in the way of imperial unity not so much by elaborating schemes of constitutional reconstruction as by developing habits of co-operation within the existing constitutional relationship, letting custom rather than formal enactment adapt imperial relations to a changing world.

In the colonies the supporters of projects for formal reorganization involving larger imperial control were almost as difficult to find, except among the ultra-conservative, as were the advocates of independence. Most colonials experienced no great difficulty in asserting independence of policy with one breath and imperial loyalty with the next. An outstanding instance of this may be seen in Sir John A. Macdonald, who had been the most prominent political leader in Canada from the days when the Dominion was in process of formation, and who was one of the canniest political strategists who ever concerned himself with the problems of national growth and imperial relationships. He increased the vote-catching value of his party's program of protective tariffs by calling it officially "The National Policy," yet in his last Dominion election in 1891 he knew how to insure victory by standing solidly on the asser-



tion "A British subject I was born; a British subject I will die." Colonials may have been illogical in considering such views compatible, but they generally held them, nevertheless, and seemed determined to demonstrate their practical if not their theoretical consistency.

Of several organizations formed to espouse imperial federation the most important in its membership and influential in its activities was the Imperial Federation League organized in 1884. Supported by prominent colonials as well as by distinguished men of both parties in Britain, it was active in several parts of the Empire, and popular discussion of imperial organization largely centered around its proposals. So varied did the conceptions of what was desirable in empire structure turn out to be, not only as between persons in and out of the League, but among its members, and so impracticable did it prove to take any step that would derogate from the autonomy already secured by the colonies, that the ideal of a speedy re-centralization under British leadership had to be left on one side, and the League itself was eventually dissolved in 1893. Those members of the League who had hoped for an organic union for defense were disappointed, and those who desired a restoration of an imperial preferential tariff system under some sort of imperial federal authority found themselves helpless in the face of colonial determination to preserve tariff autonomy and English devotion to free trade, which had now for a quarter-century been a dogma well-nigh universally accepted in the mother country.<sup>1</sup>

The propaganda of the League undoubtedly helped

<sup>1</sup> It was, however, in connection with this imperial federation movement that free trade began again to meet opposition at home.



to increase interest in the problem of imperial relations. And although that body found itself impotent to bring about the establishment of a closer organic union of the Empire it had much to do with initiating the Colonial Conference of 1887, the first of a series of conferences of representatives of colonial governments which were in time to become an important factor in developing imperial coöperation. This conference comprised colonial statesmen who were in London for the celebration of the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria's accession and were invited by the Colonial Secretary to confer with representatives of the British Government upon matters of general concern. The question of imperial federation was excluded from the deliberations, but there was profitable discussion of common problems of defense, particularly in Australia, and the promotion of means of intercourse and trade. At an economic conference held at Ottawa in 1894, which discussed the possibility of tariff preferences within the Empire and the establishment of trans-Pacific mail and cable services under British control, and at successive conferences of colonial prime ministers at London, in 1897 incidental to the spectacular celebration of Victoria's diamond jubilee, and in 1902 on the occasion of the coronation of Edward VII, the value of discussing mutual interests was again evident, as well as the fruitlessness, at least for the time being, of attempting to seek closer organic unity.

— At the conferences of 1897 and 1902, Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, made a conspicuous attempt to knit the Empire closer together though his proposal for an Imperial Council was rejected at both conferences. In the matter of defense

the colonies had proved willing, since the middle 'eighties, to expand and reorganize their militia and to bear a share of the local expense for imperial defensive works. Canada had taken over the fisheries protection service about 1885. The Australian colonies had agreed in 1887 to contribute to naval defense, in 1897 Cape Colony and Natal also agreed to participate in that burden, and in 1902 these colonies all increased their contributions, though the total still was almost negligible compared with the burden borne by taxpayers in the British Isles. On several occasions colonies had shown readiness to send military assistance far from home, notably in the Sudan campaign in 1885, and they raised a number of contingents for the Boer War at the end of the century. Chamberlain was encouraged by the enthusiasm of the self-governing colonies in sending troops on the latter occasion to believe that imperial federation could be brought about soon. But he failed fully to appreciate that, however willing they might be to coöperate on a voluntary basis, the colonies were jealous of any encroachment upon their autonomy.

Chamberlain's chief hopes centered in fiscal policy. Canada early in 1897 had introduced into its tariff a measure of imperial preference.<sup>1</sup> As a result of the Conference of 1897 the British Government agreed to revise its most favored nation treaties with foreign powers so as to secure to the colonies the right to grant preferences that should apply only within the Empire. The representatives at the Conference of 1902 resolved in favor of recommending the preferential principle for adoption by their Governments, and

<sup>1</sup> Increased considerably in 1898 and in later years.

New Zealand and South Africa adopted it in 1903 and Australia in 1907. Chamberlain dreamed of an imperial tariff union, but though he could obtain approval of the idea from some of the members of the Colonial Conference he was unable to secure the wholehearted support of his own Conservative party in Britain for a policy that would involve abandoning Free Trade. Such support as the party, after much controversy, at length accorded his proposal, had much to do with its overthrow in the election of 1905. Had he secured English approval he would still have had to cope with colonial reluctance, strongest and most clearly voiced in the case of Canada, to surrendering tariff-making power to any imperial authority, even of a federal nature. The voluntary adoption by any Dominion of preference as a feature of its tariff policy was quite a different matter, as this was possible without any diminution of the principle of autonomy.

#### GROWTH OF THE TROPICAL EMPIRE

Clear thinking about relations with self-governing colonies was made more difficult by the existence and growth of extensive tropical possessions, populated almost entirely by colored races and still completely subject to English rule. In the 'eighties large attention was again drawn to the advantages of developing and extending the tropical empire. Writings on imperial questions, which since the days of the Colonial Reformers and their schemes of systematic emigration had usually stressed the problems of the settlement colonies, now dealt increasingly with the Empire as a whole. The Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886,

and the propaganda, particularly of the Imperial Federation League, for which it provided a convenient occasion, did much to arouse public interest in the tropical possessions as well as in the self-governing empire, an interest which the presence of colonial and Indian representatives for the Queen's jubilee in the next year fostered, as did also, to a yet greater extent, the celebration of her diamond jubilee in 1897.

It was in the 'eighties, too, that the intensification of European rivalries generally, consequent upon the sharpening of economic competition incident to the progress of the industrial revolution in many countries, brought on a race for the acquisition of tropical possessions and spheres of influence in Africa, Asia, and the islands of the Pacific. The word imperialism was taking on a new and enlarged meaning that was not without its sinister aspects. The promotion of prosperity was associated with extension of the Empire no less than with its defense and preservation while its effective control was insisted upon as a condition of its profitable exploitation. The use of the same word empire to designate both the self-governing colonies and these other possessions not infrequently led, under the circumstances, to a confusion of issues. Pride in those younger communities that so flatteringly emulated the constitution of the mother state sometimes served to reënforce a jingoistic assumption of moral no less than material superiority over other imperial powers, while on the other hand the arrogance that was too often bred by lordship over backward races was not always laid aside in dealings with overseas Britons. At the same time the latter basked in the reflected glory of an expanding Empire, on which, they were proud to say, the

sun never set, but from the obligations of which they had managed so largely to remain free. Enthusiasm over both types of empire was not uncommonly found in the same person whether in Britain or overseas.

Tennyson was the poet-laureate of mid-Victorianism. It was early in the 'eighties that he voiced the new but still mid-Victorian type of imperialism when he wrote:

We sailed wherever ship could sail,  
We founded many a mighty state;  
Pray God our greatness may not fail  
Through craven fears of being great.

Rudyard Kipling was the unofficial poet-laureate of late-Victorianism, and he voiced the newer imperialism in its various manifestations. He could write with insight of Canada: "Daughter am I in my Mother's house, but mistress in my own." He could sing of "The White Man's Burden," which lordship over backward races laid so heavily upon the ruling race, finding in the theories of trusteeship sufficient sanction for the profits, or the lack of them, as well as reason for the effort and the pains, of economic imperialism in the tropics. Witnessing the celebration of the diamond jubilee of the Queen-Empress, marked by a veritable pageant of empire, he could write his "Recessional," mingling imperial pride and hope with wondering awe and anxious trepidation, a pæan of empire which men commonly sing as a hymn of humility. Truly it was a complex Empire that he sang, the compass of its destiny wavering uncertainly between the poles of exploitation and freedom.

## AUSTRALIA UNITED

For a dozen years after they had spurned Earl Grey's mid-century suggestion of a federally united Australia, the isolated Australian colonies, as jealous of one another as they were of a British Secretary of State, remained suspicious of any talk of union, even when it was voiced by certain leading men in the settlements. Till the younger colonies should have had time to grow considerably, the preponderance of New South Wales made federation on a genuinely equal basis impracticable. Tariff policies of the several colonies not only set up fiscal barriers among them, but became sharply divergent in character, some free trade, some protectionist. Railways were planned and built so provincially that different gauges of track were used, thus making as difficult as possible their later correlation into a national system. After the early 'sixties it seemed as if a satisfactory and sufficient substitute for political union had been found in the practice of holding intercolonial conferences on particular subjects as occasion arose. As late as 1881 a proposal for a federal council to deal with intercolonial matters received the support of only three of the colonies.

The remoteness of their island continent from Europe and from European rivalries in Asia, and the absence of powerful neighbors, joined with a confidence in the efficacy of British naval supremacy to protect their sea-ways, fostered a sense of security. They felt no need of union against a common danger, such as to counterbalance their local feelings. But, while steady improvements in communications were minimizing the isolating effects of distance, the situation in Asia and in



the Pacific was changing rapidly as a result of the growth of Russian power to the shores of that ocean and her influence on the frontiers of India, the rapid westernization of Japan, and the imperialistic activity of Germany and France in neighboring islands as well as on the Asiatic mainland. Notably Germany's acquisition of part of New Guinea, next door to Australia, in 1883, roused in the English colonies a sense of insecurity. Some of them straightway set up a federal council. They soon consented, as seen above, to contribute something to naval defense. In 1890 a comprehensive report on the state of their military defenses woke them to the need for action.

Federation became important. Sir Henry Parkes, the Premier of New South Wales, called a conference at which the delegates all agreed to secure the appointment by their several governments of delegates to a National Australasian Convention (New Zealand would attend but was unlikely to enter a federation). This Convention, in 1891, came down to details and drafted a bill largely along the lines later followed. But the legislatures proved indifferent; in 1893 New South Wales dropped the project indefinitely.

Meanwhile a national consciousness had been developing. The population was remarkably homogeneous in race and cultural tradition, being almost entirely of British origin. If isolation of the colonies from one another had tended to keep them apart, that isolation was being overcome by better communications, and their common isolation from the Old World had tended, along with their joint occupation of a virgin continent, to breed a genuine national feeling. It was at last



strong enough, not to obliterate, but considerably to qualify, sentiments of intercolonial separateness.

An Australian Natives Association took up the advocacy of federation, and proposed in 1893 that the colonial legislatures should authorize the election of representatives to a convention, to draft a federal constitution, which should be submitted for popular approval before being formally sanctioned by the Imperial Parliament. A Conference of prime ministers met in 1895 and adopted the idea. The Convention did its work in 1897 and 1898. In 1899 remaining differences were ironed out at a meeting of Premiers. After approval by popular vote in five<sup>1</sup> of the colonies, the measure, with very slight alteration agreed to, was passed by the British Parliament in 1900 and the Commonwealth of Australia came into being with the new century on January 1, 1901.

The constitution, drafted and adopted in such democratic fashion, left larger powers to the states, as the colonies were hereafter styled, than had been allotted to the Canadian provinces. In this, as in some other respects, the example of the United States of America was followed more closely than it had been in Canada. In contrast, however, to the trend in the older Dominion, there was later a tendency in the Commonwealth towards a larger centralization of authority than was contemplated by the makers of its federal constitution. As in the case of Canada the preservation of the British connection was taken for granted and Responsible Government such as was already operative in the several states was set up also at the center.

<sup>1</sup> Western Australia voted its approval after the passage of the Act.

## SOUTH AFRICA UNITED

In South Africa the facts of geography, and the essential unity of the most important problems demanding attention by government, particularly the native question, pointed early to the obvious advantages to be derived from political unification. Following the Great Trek the British authorities at the Cape had no intention or desire to abandon their claim to control at least the native policy and external relations of the Boers in their new homes. The Colonial Office, however, intermittently restrained the local Government from assuming the real responsibility which control in those matters must involve. In 1848 the governor of Cape Colony, who had recently been given authority as High Commissioner to deal with affairs beyond the borders of that colony, tried to assert control by formally proclaiming British sovereignty over the territory between the Orange and Vaal rivers eastward to the Drakensberg. But the policy of forcible expansion provoked Boer opposition to being thus again brought under a political system previously repudiated, and it led to increasingly extensive warfare with native tribes which proved as unprofitable as it was costly. Continuance of the policy would entail further imperial burdens. The enlarged governmental and military expenditure involved for the Colony was unpopular with the Cape population, among whom, moreover, there was much fellow-feeling with the burghers beyond the Orange and hostility to their coercion. Gathering war clouds in Europe made it expedient to conciliate this colonial opinion, particularly as Cape Colony was the key to British power in South Africa. Although the

Colonial Office well appreciated the difficulties that a continued division of authority and diversity of policy as between Briton and Boer must leave in the way of securing a unified, effective, and humane native policy, yet it was prevented from supporting the strong hand that seemed necessary to secure such unification by the incompatibility of forcible means with the *laissez-faire* ideals that were then in the ascendancy. Earl Grey consequently withdrew support from the policy of annexation. The independence of the Transvaal was recognized in 1852, and in 1854, despite a change of Government in England, the new policy was pursued by abandoning the sovereignty which had recently been so positively asserted over the Orange River territory, the British resting content with assurances that Boer prohibition of slavery and the slave-trade would be continued, and agreeing themselves not to extend their alliances among the native tribes in those regions.

This policy did not appeal to Sir George Grey, of New Zealand fame, who now arrived as governor of the Cape. He appreciated the essential unity of South African problems and interests and had hopes of forming a federal union to include not only the English colonies but the Orange Free State and eventually the Transvaal. But his tentative endeavors in this direction were repudiated by the Colonial Office under successive Liberal and Conservative Governments in 1858 and 1859. Seeming justification of Sir George Grey's course lay in the apparent willingness if not eagerness of some Free Staters to enter a united South Africa as a self-governing colony. But this could hardly have been feasible so long as Cape Colony itself lacked Responsible Government. And as a matter of fact the

internal politics of the Boer republics in their early years were marked by divisive localisms that would have made the success of such a policy, to say the least, uncertain. Yet with skillful and persistent coaxing something might have been accomplished by negotiation. It is one of the ironies of South African history that the anti-expansionist character of colonial policy at this period checkmated Sir George Grey's attempt. Paradoxically the policy that involved independence and self-help for the young Boer republics also, by leaving the older community at the Cape in continued insecurity, helped to involve a prolongation of its political subordination and military dependence.

The Earl of Carnarvon called Sir George Grey a dangerous man in 1859 in view of his work for South African federation. But Carnarvon happened to be Colonial Secretary in 1867, when the British North America Act was passed by Parliament, and was proud of the important share attributed to him in the formation of the Canadian Dominion. When he returned to the Colonial Office in 1874, upon the restoration of the Conservatives to power, he was ambitious to sponsor similar union in South Africa, now that Responsible Government had been established in Cape Colony (1872). He sent the historian Froude thither in 1874 to promote the cause. But the Orange Free State, outraged by British annexation of recently discovered diamond fields in territory which it claimed as its own, was not now in a favorable mood, and in Cape Colony there was jealousy lest the proposed confederation be an imperialistic device for restoring a measure of the imperial control surrendered by the grant of Responsible Government.

Plans for securing the adhesion of the Transvaal and thus bringing pressure on Natal and the Orange Free State were upset by the premature and injudicious annexation of the Transvaal in 1877. A serious Zulu war, which threatened the peace of all South Africa, seemed for a time to justify the annexation, but after the defeat of the Zulus such measure of acquiescence as there had been was overcome by the outspoken opposition of the majority of the Transvaal Boers. This prevented ratification of the annexation, and in 1880 precipitated a serious military rising against British authority marked by defeats of British forces. Gladstone's Liberal Government, returning to power in that year, was eager for peace at almost any price and found a compromise settlement by recognizing the Transvaal State in 1881 as having "complete self-government, subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty" (which involved "entire self-government in interior affairs" but British supervision of foreign relations), the prohibition of slavery, and guarantees of civil rights, but without mention of the franchise which was later to be a subject of sharp controversy. The enabling act passed by the British Parliament in 1877 to authorize a confederation might better not have been passed. The Colonial Office was at last convinced that the union issue had best be left alone till it should be raised by the South African communities. Imperial initiative in the matter had become as suspect as it was obvious and ill-advised.

Meanwhile economic and political forces were at work in South Africa, focused in a group of capitalists among whom the most spectacular and significant figure was Cecil Rhodes, who divided his time among

politics, business, and the dreams of empire which he hoped, by dominating in both those realms of activity, to bring to fruition. The financial strength of the group was based upon the diamond mines of Kimberley, and the control, secured by 1891, of 90 per cent of the diamonds of South Africa. Rhodes planned, through the British South Africa Company, for which a charter was secured in 1889, to thrust jurisdiction northward towards British East Africa and fling a British railway through the tropical heart of the continent (much of it highland and "white man's country") till it should link with the British-controlled railways of Egypt and the Sudan and establish a Cape to Cairo line as the central nerve of the continent's internal communications and the backbone of a British African Empire.

Rhodes hoped to include the Boer Republics as self-governing states within his imperial scheme under the Union Jack. He would form a South African economic federation from which a political federation would follow, which in turn might be the nucleus of an Imperial Federation such as many men were talking about but which he hoped thus to build. The Transvaal, however, had its own ambitions for expansion, and entered upon a contest with the Chartered Company. The development of the gold mines of the Rand came in time to provide the Republic with the wealth necessary for the prosecution of the contest, but it also introduced into the Transvaal an English-speaking element, concentrated on the Rand, clamorous for a voice in the politics of the Republic. To prevent these Outlanders from securing control over the government which their taxes largely supported, the Burgher gov-



ernment, under its reactionary and tenacious president, Paul Kruger, prescribed discriminating conditions that largely excluded the Outlanders from the franchise, so as to retain political power in burgher hands, and continued to pursue fiscal and railway policies hostile alike to the mining interests within the Transvaal and to the territorial ambitions of the South Africa Company beyond its borders.

Rhodes had become financially interested in the Rand and also had become Premier of Cape Colony. The political power of that colony, the ambitions of the Chartered Company, the interests of the Outlanders, might perhaps be utilized in effective combination to force the Transvaal into economic union. But schemes for combined action fell through when a force under Dr. Jameson, Administrator of the Company's territory of Rhodesia, crossing the republican frontier in December 1895 in an ill-timed attempt to upset the Kruger régime and hoping for Outlander help that was not forthcoming, was seized by Kruger's men. The British Government repudiated the Raid. Jameson was ransomed and taken to England for trial, where he suffered only a nominal sentence. Rhodes resigned his premiership, was severely censured by a British Parliamentary Committee, and lost his place in the Privy Council. If the Kaiser's telegram of congratulation to Kruger over the fiasco of the Raid incensed the British public, the failure seriously to punish those responsible for the affair was tantamount to a signal to continental powers, particularly Germany, to desist from meddling in what London was determined should not concern them. As for union, hope



of its voluntary consummation was crushed by the racial bitterness that the Raid had only increased.

Matters moved steadily from bad to worse. Joseph Chamberlain, as Colonial Secretary, already suspected of being a party to Rhodes's schemes against the Kruger Government, now backed the political demands of the Outlanders for equal rights so uncompromisingly that by 1899 the British Government found itself faced with the alternatives of a humiliating withdrawal of military forces recently concentrated on the frontier or accepting Kruger's challenge to fight it out, a situation which Chamberlain had apparently done little to avoid, if not, indeed, a good deal to invite. Before the Boers of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, which joined in the struggle, were convinced of the futility of further prolonging a hopeless fight, Great Britain had to foot a pretty bill and transport to South Africa the largest armies she had ever sent abroad. She welcomed, for their practical aid as well as for their moral support, the colonial contingents which came from far-flung corners of the Empire to join in the defense of what they believed to be vital imperial interests and the equal rights of British subjects in South Africa.

The Empire, especially England itself, did not, however, lack its "pro-Boers," who openly asserted that the war was as unnecessary and iniquitous as it was expensive in wealth and human life. When peace was made in 1902, on the basis of full British sovereignty over the defeated communities, it was with the promise of British financial aid in restoring the economic life of the countryside, and the pledge that, as soon as feasible, "institutions leading toward self-government" would be set up. Even the war-time Conservative

Government could promise no less to peoples in whose self-government Great Britain had acquiesced almost continuously for more than half a century. Plans were soon laid for a partial measure of representative government, but the return of the Liberal party to power in Britain at the close of 1905<sup>1</sup> meant prompt provision for the establishment of full Responsible Government. It went into effect in 1907 in both the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, which now took again its old name of Free State. In both governments leading places were occupied by generals who had commanded Boer armies in the field in the late conflict, of whom the most outstanding were Louis Botha, Premier of the Transvaal, and Jan Christian Smuts, his principal colleague. ✓

Talk of political union had been revived even before the completion of pacification. Now that in the four colonies there were similar systems of Responsible Government rapid progress towards the goal was possible. And it was needed. Problems of native policy and oriental labor made unification both imperative and difficult. The competitive rivalry of the several states in their railway rates and their customs charges had been temporarily eliminated by a recent agreement, the continuance of which was precarious if not impracticable without political union. The meeting of an intercolonial railway and customs conference in 1908 led to the preparation and adoption at a National Convention of a scheme of political union. After amendment by the local legislatures and embodiment in a Bill this measure, prepared in South Africa, re-

<sup>1</sup> Partly as a result of public protest against the recent introduction of indentured Chinese labor in the Rand mines.

ceived the endorsement of the British Parliament in 1909. In 1910 the Union of South Africa came into being under a Responsible Government, the first Prime Minister being General Botha. Because the principal divisions in South Africa had been essentially racial rather than territorial, and boundaries had been accidental and artificial in most cases, and because the problems requiring chief attention were obviously best handled by a single central authority, the Union was not federal, as in Canada and Australia, but unitary. The provincial councils provided for were essentially municipal in their jurisdiction and character. Subsequent events seemed to indicate the wisdom of this type of union for South Africa.

## CHAPTER III

### EQUAL STATUS AND INTERDEPENDENCE: THE ERA OF THE COMMONWEALTH (1911-1932)

#### EMPIRE UNIFICATION AND DOMINION STATUS

THE imperial problem had now reached a new stage as a result of three factors. The formation of the Australian Commonwealth and the Union of South Africa reduced by more than one half (from fourteen to six) the number of governments to be represented at colonial conferences<sup>1</sup> and made the time ripe for enlarging and applying more widely certain practices in the conduct of imperial relations which had already been developing, particularly in connection with the senior colonial federation, Canada. The large migration from the mother country to the overseas Empire in the first decade of the century augmented the population and importance of Canada and Australia so rapidly as further to hasten the day when the Empire could justifiably be called, as it was by the Australian prime minister in 1914, a "Family of Nations." The increasing tenseness of international relations, among rival imperialistic powers with world-wide and sharply conflicting interests, impressed upon the members of this "family" the urgency of standing shoulder to

<sup>1</sup> United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Newfoundland.

shoulder. What shape should the relationship among them and with Britain now assume in order best to meet their common needs while satisfying their separate national aspirations? The problem of imperial organization was uppermost at the Conferences held in 1907, when the speedy union of South Africa was being anticipated, and in 1911, the year after its consummation.

Alternative solutions were offered. The first was represented by a proposal, which had been brought before the colonial Governments prior to the Conference of 1907 by the late Conservative Government in England, that the Conference be transformed into an Imperial Council, and by a plea, put forward by New Zealand in 1911, for the establishment of an Imperial Parliament of Defense. This sort of solution was looked upon with some favor by the younger and more dependent colonies, especially those bordering the Pacific, concerned primarily with insuring themselves a voice in general British policy in the Far East. But Canada viewed as of paramount importance her own particular problems arising from relations with her large republican neighbor. Desiring these problems to be approached from the point of view of Canadian rather than general imperial interests, Canada wished not so much a share in directing imperial policy as an independent voice in these matters of principally Canadian concern. Her Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who since 1897 had been the most distinguished and influential colonial statesman at imperial gatherings, emphasized the necessity of not endangering in any degree existing colonial autonomy but rather leaving the way open for its progressive enlargement. Co-

operation was desirable, but not on the basis of delegating powers to an Imperial Council or setting up a federal Imperial Parliament with power to overrule the existing parliaments of the Empire. The reduction in the powers of the Dominions which that would inevitably involve would not be adequately offset by representation in an imperial body in which the representatives of any Dominion must be in a hopeless minority. The first alternative, therefore, was rejected.

Progress was made, however, towards the second alternative, that of equal coöperation among autonomous governments. The Conference of 1907 decided in favor of transforming the Colonial Conference, a body of representatives of colonial governments called into consultation by the Colonial Secretary, into an Imperial Conference, essentially a conference of heads of cabinets, in which the prime ministers of the Dominions (the term Dominions was thenceforth applied generally to the five colonies represented in the Conference) and of the United Kingdom should meet under the chairmanship of the latter, with certain of their cabinet colleagues, for consultation. It was resolved to hold periodical meetings of such a conference every four years, and subsidiary conferences on special problems as occasion might arise. Furthermore, approval was given to the creation of a permanent secretarial staff, to be organized as a distinct branch of the Colonial Office for the purpose of attending to the routine business of the Conference between as well as during its periodical gatherings. At the 1911 Conference a majority of the representatives were of the opinion that no further change was then needed in the organiza-

tion either of the Conference or of the Colonial Office. For the first time, however, the Conference in 1911 was given a confidential view of the international situation and of British foreign policy, and it was agreed that henceforth the Dominion Governments should be brought more closely in touch with foreign affairs both by way of receiving information and being consulted before the conclusion of international agreements affecting them. In the negotiation of certain commercial agreements with foreign powers, colonies had for some decades enjoyed a large voice, though formally acting through the British Government. The new understanding had to do with foreign affairs of a wider sort, with regard to which, while there was yet no sharing of authority, the way was opened for the exercise of influence by the Dominions.

— Many economic questions of common concern were discussed at these conferences and at a number of subsidiary conferences, especially with regard to movements of population and facilities for trade and communications, but as time went on the growing international tension made problems of defense uppermost. At a subsidiary Defense Conference in 1909 increased Dominion participation in naval defense was agreed upon and arrangements were made for so organizing the military forces of the Empire as to make possible in case of need their rapid and effective combination. The Conference of 1911 was marked by further discussion on defense, and about the same time the Committee of Imperial Defense, an advisory body constituted by the British Government in 1904, decided to invite representatives appointed by the Dominion Governments to attend its meetings when questions affect-



ing the Dominions were under consideration. Upon learning of this, the new Conservative Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Robert Borden, took occasion to ask that Dominion ministers, in London as members of this committee, should receive confidentially full information concerning British policy. The British Government went further, and offered to make full information on all questions of imperial policy available constantly to any Dominion minister resident in the United Kingdom. Such a minister would have free access to the British Prime Minister and to the Foreign and Colonial Secretaries. In June 1914 a member of the Canadian Government reached London to act in such capacity.

Many persons still failed to see a possibility of satisfactory evolution along lines of autonomous coöperation; they were convinced that some form of federal authority must be devised to save the Empire from disintegration complete and disastrous. Recognizing the complexity of the subject and the impossibility of arriving offhand at a satisfactory or workable scheme, a number of zealous believers in the efficacy of organization formed so-called Round Table Groups in many centers throughout the Empire for the coöperative study of the problem, and in 1910 began publication of a quarterly journal, *The Round Table*, devoted to imperial affairs. By calling attention to the complexity of imperial problems and the transcendent importance of imperial relations they undoubtedly did high service to the Empire, but their original hope of finding a solution of its difficulties along federal lines was to be disappointed.

The widespread war that burst upon the world

in 1914 soon turned it topsy-turvy in many respects, but it would be a mistake to assume that it was a turning-point in the history of British imperial relations. In fact, rather, it intensified problems already demanding an imperial solution, and it speeded up the evolution of the imperial relationship along lines which it was already following.

The prompt and large participation of the Dominions and other overseas parts of the Empire in the war demonstrated the solidarity of imperial sentiment as well as interests. The emotional bonds of empire were strengthened, not so much in the direction of loyalty to the mother country as of loyalty to the whole. As in many countries of Europe so also in the Empire the war strengthened the forces of democracy, while loud proclamation by British leaders that it was being fought in the interest of small nations and oppressed nationalities could not but strengthen the position of those who believed that the greatest future for the Empire lay in yet larger recognition of the claims of nationality in its several parts. The scale and effectiveness of the voluntary efforts of the Dominions seemed to offer irrefutable evidence that there were not, after all, those dangers in the recognition and encouragement of autonomy that had been so insistently stressed by the federationists. Governments, and the great mass of citizens, alike in mother country and in Dominions, were apparently at one in believing that it was not merely safe, but desirable and only just, that the Dominions should be accorded ampler recognition as co-operating partners in the Empire.

The larger Dominions insisted upon administering their own military forces. On the other hand, as early

as 1915 the leaders of their Governments began to take part in the deliberations of the British Cabinet on matters connected with the conflict. In 1917, after Mr. Lloyd George had assumed the Prime Ministership, there met the next Imperial Conference. Its decisions definitely and intentionally scotched the projects of the imperial federationists. While postponing till after the war any attempt to deal formally with the problem of the future constitution of the Empire, the Conference asserted that any readjustment of constitutional relations should be based upon the preservation of existing powers of self-government and "full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth, and of India as an important portion of the same, should recognize the right of the Dominions and India to an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations, and should provide effective arrangements for continuous consultation in all important matters of common Imperial concern, and for such necessary action, founded on consultation, as the several Governments may determine." Forthwith, in practical ways, the ideal embodied in this resolution was brought nearer realization.

Concurrently with the meetings of the Conference, the overseas representatives were made temporary members of the British War Cabinet, transforming it, for the time being, into an Imperial War Cabinet. All members had full access to all information in the hands of the British Government and a voice in all imperial and war problems. From that time forth the Prime Ministers of the Dominions were kept fully and confidentially informed by the British Prime Minister con-

cerning the war. From 1918 onwards information concerning foreign affairs as well was regularly communicated. Imperial War Cabinet and War Conference met again in 1918, when it was decided that in order to keep the governments of the Empire in most effective touch, the old practice of communication between Dominion and British Governments by circuitous route through Governor and Colonial Office needed to be regularly supplemented; <sup>1</sup> the Prime Ministers of the Dominions should have the right of direct communication with the British Prime Minister on any matters of cabinet importance. In such ways there was partially recognized in practice an equality of status already loudly and publicly proclaimed.

✓ The Dominions demanded such a voice in the peace settlement as would secure international recognition of their new national status. In convincing the British Government of the importance of securing international assent to this demand for larger recognition, Sir Robert Borden, still Prime Minister of Canada, played the most persistent rôle. In the end, besides the representatives of the British Empire as such at the Peace Conference at Paris in 1919, there were separate delegations representing Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Newfoundland and India. All of these formed, for purposes of discussion among themselves, a "British Empire Delegation." They signed the peace treaties on behalf of their several governments and, after some insistence on the part of Sir Robert Borden, ratification was held up till the Do-

<sup>1</sup> The High Commissioners and Agents General of the Dominions in London were more like commercial representatives. They had neither cabinet nor diplomatic rank.

minion Governments might consult their respective Parliaments.

In the League of Nations, which came into being in 1920 under the terms of the Covenant embodied in the Peace Treaties, General Smuts of South Africa having played an important part in the League of Nations Commission by which the Covenant was drafted, the Dominions<sup>1</sup> and India ranked among the smaller powers, with full membership in the Assembly and eligibility to election to non-permanent seats in the Council. As early as 1925 a Dominion representative, Senator Dandurand of Canada, served as president of the Assembly. Two years later a Dominion (Canada) was elected to a non-permanent seat in the Council. For a time there was doubt in the minds of some observers as to whether this membership in the League was not merely a device by which the weight of the British Empire in world counsels could be increased. Events demonstrated, however, that not the policies of Downing Street but their own policies were voiced by these members of the Commonwealth when their representatives spoke and voted at Geneva and at other international conferences. Members of the British Empire Delegation might confer together on matters of mutual interest, but they voted independently and by no means always in harmony.

At the Imperial Conference of 1921 it was deemed unnecessary to take any action concerning the constitution of the Empire such as had been anticipated by the Conference of 1917, in view of the practical devel-

<sup>1</sup> Except Newfoundland. While not a member Newfoundland has been invited to accede to numerous League agreements and is classed by the League not among colonies but among states.

opments which had taken place in the meantime. So advantageous had the practice of continuous consultation between the Prime Ministers already proved that its importance was re-asserted. The principle of direct communication and the right of Dominion Prime Ministers to have cabinet representatives in London to consult on their behalf were reaffirmed. Thus, while Dominion Status meant independent international rights of a practical sort as well as theoretical recognition of the Dominions as international entities, it also meant an increased influence in the formulation of imperial policies.

#### THE IRISH FREE STATE AND DOMINION STATUS

The Irish question provided the next chapter in the history of Dominion Status. Hitherto that age-long and troublesome question had belonged primarily to the internal history of the British Isles, although Irish emigration and controversies over Irish Home Rule had not been without their repercussions upon imperial relations.

During the Great War armed insurrection brought upon the island the heavy hand of military rule, but the growing crisis was overshadowed for a time by the wider conflict. In the armistice election at the close of 1918 English politicians seemed to have forgotten Ireland, and they woke up to find Sinn Fein candidates victorious in a majority of Irish constituencies. Refusing to take their seats at Westminster, these Sinn Feiners formed themselves into the Dail Eireann and asserted an authority in much of Ireland which was denied by British law but nevertheless accepted by



many of the Irish people. For long months the main attention of British statesmen was absorbed in the problems of the Peace Conference and European reconstruction, but in 1920 time was found to frame a new Home Rule measure. Ireland was by it divided in two, each section to have its own legislature and at the same time to retain some representation in the British Parliament. For the majority in Ulster, which had been obdurate in its opposition to any form of Irish Home Rule that would tie it with the rest of Ireland or sever it from the Parliament at Westminster, the setting up of a government of Northern Ireland on this plan proved satisfactory. But most of the country would have none of it.

Sinn Feiners carried covert violence across the Irish sea, while redoubling their resistance in Ireland to the harshness of repressive militarism. Their best card was the incongruity of the British position. Britain had professed to espouse the cause of small nations in the war; at the Peace Conference her statesmen had not only taken the same stand, but had pressed successfully for international recognition of the national aspirations of the Dominions. The obvious inconsistency between English professions of respect for nationality in distant Dominions and contemptuous suppression of Irish nationality near the heart of the Empire hampered relations with the Dominions and was alienating the good will of the United States where the Irish vote could not be ignored. Dominion Status had been unacceptable to the Irish as recently as 1917, but in the interim its scope had been greatly enlarged.

The time was thus auspicious for a fresh attempt to settle the Irish question. Negotiations brought a treaty



by which the Irish Free State (all of the island except Northern Ireland) proceeded to frame for itself a constitution providing for its responsible self-government as "a co-equal member of the Community of Nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations," with the same constitutional status therein as that enjoyed by the Dominion of Canada. One of the oldest nationalities in Europe became in 1922 one of the newest kinds of state. Its representatives in the following year were welcomed to their places in the League of Nations and in the Imperial Conference.

The pacification of a war-torn country proved no easy task for the new Irish Government, but it was made infinitely easier by the fact that the irreconcilable extremists found now little sympathy and less support from beyond the seas in their attempt to prevent the success of Irish self-government in the hands of men no less devoted to the cause of Irish nationality than they were themselves. The leaders of the Free State came to recognize the advantages of friendly association with Great Britain as Ireland's nearest neighbor and largest market. They desired to conciliate Northern Ireland and eventually induce it to join with the Free State in a united Ireland. But in view of Ulster's historic traditions this appeared to be impracticable till Northern Ireland should be convinced that union with the Free State would not mean severance from the Commonwealth. Even Mr. de Valera and his followers, though they had spurned the treaty, at length consented to go through the form of taking the oath of allegiance in order to assume the rôle of a constitutional Opposition. They were rewarded by succeeding to power early in 1932.

The leaders of the Free State were quick to avail themselves of any symbols or instruments of autonomy to which claim could be laid. For example Canada had secured the approval of the British Government, as well as the consent of the American, to establishing permanent Canadian diplomatic representation at Washington; the Free State took advantage of the opportunity before Canada was ready to do so, and in 1924 set up an Irish legation at the American capital.<sup>1</sup> The existence of Dominion Status in 1921 had provided Britain and the Empire with a way out of the Irish impasse, but the Free State was henceforth to exercise no small influence upon the further development of imperial relations.

#### DOMINION STATUS FULLY RECOGNIZED

The Irish Free State was not the only member of the British community of nations which chafed against constitutional anomalies. In South Africa an overturn of parties in 1924 opened a critical period for the British connection. The creation of the Union had placed control in Boer hands, but the element since then in power, the South African Party of Botha and Smuts, had advocated preserving the imperial connection. Not so the Nationalist party. General Hertzog, their leader, who now became head of a Nationalist-Labor Coalition, held that South Africa was a "helot state" and that the existing Dominion Status, despite all professions from whatever quarter as to its dignity

<sup>1</sup> Canada followed in 1926, and the United States established legations in Ottawa and Dublin in 1927. In 1928 and following years Canada, the Free State, and South Africa established similar diplomatic exchanges with several capitals.

and advantages, was worthy only of repudiation. In Canada, also, and in less degree in Australia, fervent post-war nationalism found expression in attacks upon all remnants of legal subordination to the mother country. On the other hand there were many persons in all the Dominions and certainly a majority in some, who, believing that there was a community of culture and of interests in the Empire which it was of paramount importance to preserve, feared lest it had already been seriously jeopardized by recent weakening of the traditional links of empire.

By the time the Imperial Conference of 1926 met it was clear that if there was to be smooth sailing in the near future, many aspects of imperial relations must be freshly charted. A special Inter-Imperial Relations Committee of the Conference, known popularly as the Premiers' Committee, devoted itself exclusively to this object under the chairmanship of Lord Balfour. Its report is one of the most interesting and important documents in imperial history. In defining the constitutional position and mutual relations of Great Britain and the Dominions as they had now come to exist it said: "They [Great Britain and the Dominions] are autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations." The principle was asserted that whatever forms of procedure might for convenience still be used, in essence the Dominions were free to exercise such degree of practical independence as they desired, although it was recognized that in the com-

mon interest no Dominion should take decisive action affecting the conduct of either intra-imperial or international relations without consultation with the other Commonwealth Governments concerned.

The measure of the Committee's achievement was shown by the fact that, despite some early attempts in various parts of the Empire to make party capital out of attacking the *Report*, it soon became clear that it embodied a view equally reassuring to those who had feared disintegration and to those who had chafed against the subordination of the Dominions. Most strikingly, for example, General Smuts was satisfied that the essentials of the Commonwealth association had been sufficiently and surely safeguarded, while General Hertzog went home happy and proud at having won recognition of South Africa's full and independent dignity as a nation. Since the phrasing of the *Report* enabled him to assert that the Union's association in the Commonwealth was not only co-equal but free, and that there was no constitutional bar, in his view, to complete independence, there was no longer occasion for such independence. In short, the formula that was embodied in the *Report* seemed to meet the difficulties of the most suspicious and sensitive members of the Commonwealth while safeguarding coöperation on the basis of free association.

There were still details to attend to if the legalities of the situation were to be brought into line with the principles of the Committee's *Report*. The Conference therefore provided for the convening of a special Conference on the Operation of Dominion Legislation and Merchant Shipping Legislation. This issued an elaborate *Report* in 1929, recommending a series of tech-

nical legal changes intended to place the Parliaments of Great Britain and the Dominions, in form as well as in fact, upon an equal footing. Such exceptions as might remain would be at the desire of the Dominions concerned. The Imperial Conference of 1930 accepted this *Report*, and a draft "Statute of Westminster," embodying the changes, was in 1931, after approval by the Parliaments of the several Dominions, formally enacted by the British Parliament.

Yet equality of status did not necessarily mean entire equality of function, as had been pointed out in the *Report* of 1926. Nor did inequality of function imply inequality of status. For example, it might be convenient for a Dominion to continue to make use of certain technical channels in the British Government, say in formally validating with the great seal the official papers connected with the appointment of a diplomatic representative or a Governor General, although in neither of these matters had His Majesty's Government in Great Britain now any discretionary power. The Dominions have thus far varied in their practice in such matters. The Irish Government, by direct consultation with the King in 1931, arranged for the striking of a great seal for the Irish Free State, which should be kept and used at Dublin. The Canadian Government, while equally taking advantage of the right to ignore the British Cabinet in the process of selecting a new Governor General, and itself providing a new type of instructions consonant with the new position of the Governor General as representative not of the British Government but of the King personally, was content in 1931 to have the great seal of the realm affixed in London as of old to the warrant authorizing

the King's commission to the Governor General. Equality of status by no means involves identity of practice, or even identity of view as to what the eventual practice should become. But it does involve an abstention on the part of every member of the Commonwealth from attempting, through variation of technical function or otherwise, to assert a superior authority over a fellow member of the Commonwealth.

#### INDIA AND THE COMMONWEALTH

The teeming millions of India offered an apparently limitless market for products which Britain, as her Industrial Revolution progressed, could supply in ever-increasing amount. Expansion of trade involved extension of territorial power and political influence. The process, having been begun during the contest with France in the middle years of the eighteenth century, went on apace during the period of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. After dangers of French rivalry there were past the British still found themselves drawn into further extensions of their power in order to establish that law and order conducive to uninterrupted commerce and expanding profits. Native misgovernment and opposition to British policy alike gave occasion for action, while the desirability of securing a strategic frontier also influenced policy. By annexations, brought about on various pretexts, a large part of the Ganges basin and the southeast and southwest coasts together with the Punjab and other scattered areas passed under direct rule before the mutiny of 1857. Other regions were brought under a measure of control, particularly as to their external relations,



by the formation of subsidiary alliances with native rulers.

Thus the Indian sub-continent came to comprise on the one hand British India, or those territories where British authority had replaced native authority, and on the other hand the Native States, whose rulers, while acknowledging the British power as paramount, were not only advised by British "Residents" at their courts, but were maintained on their thrones by that British overlordship to which they now owed allegiance. A glance at the map of India will reveal how intermingled geographically are these two Indias. The former to-day comprises about two-thirds of the whole area and three-fourths of the population, and is organized into a number of provinces. The latter comprises a medley of principalities varying greatly in size and importance. India is roughly comparable with the main peninsula of Europe west of Russia, in area, in numbers of population, and in the number and size of its principal political subdivisions. The diversity is greater in India in many respects, notably as regards climate, density of population, and cultural development.

The East India Company enjoyed a monopoly of English commerce and authority in India from the days of Elizabeth, but in consequence of the growth of its territorial power it became on the political side before the close of the eighteenth century virtually an instrument for carrying out the policy of a department of the British Government. Its monopoly of the Indian trade was withdrawn as early as 1813, and that of the China trade followed in 1833. Thenceforth it was essentially a governing organization. In 1858, following the suppression of the Mutiny, the powers and territories of



the Company were formally transferred to the Crown, the Governor General became a Viceroy, and responsibility to the British Parliament for the government of India was vested in a Secretary of State for India assisted by a council. In 1877 Disraeli, now the Earl of Beaconsfield, had Victoria proclaimed Empress of India, thus appealing to the imagination of the Indian peoples while asserting the greatness of England's power in the East and feeding imperial sentiment at home. Alike in these formal relations to the British Government and in the popular mind in Britain, India still stood distinctly apart from the colonial empire. There seemed to be hardly anything in common between the political problems of the two empires. Yet the next three quarters of a century were to see a remarkable change in the point of view both of Indians and of Englishmen, resulting from the growth of Indian nationalism and the evolution of the Commonwealth.

National consciousness in Asiatic countries has grown rapidly in recent generations partly by imitation of European nationalism, and partly by way of reaction and resistance against European domination. In a measure, also, as in Europe, it has depended upon the introduction of various phases of the Industrial Revolution which have created new conditions favoring its growth. British policy in India tended in various ways to foster Indian nationalism. In the first place the British unified India to a degree never accomplished by any of its earlier rulers. This was true of political and legal administration, and of economic life and culture as well. India became much more than a geographical expression. A state railway system knit its

diverse parts into an economic unity and interdependence unknown in earlier ages, while irrigation and reclamation works and the application of scientific research to agricultural and other economic problems and to promoting public health all tended to increase the importance of unified control and awaken an Indian consciousness of the advantages and necessity of common action. Even the native states, while jealous of the hostile attitude of elements in British India towards the power of the princes, came to feel themselves part of an all-India community.

The decision in 1833 to make English the language of instruction in the whole system of higher education established under government auspices was not merely a convenience in supplying more satisfactory recruits for the native civil service, but, more important, it furnished the educated elements among the Indian peoples, whose own tongues numbered more than two hundred, falling in half a dozen distinct language groups, with a *lingua franca* that made possible ready intercourse among the educated of all sections and classes. This bred national consciousness and facilitated India-wide propaganda and organization in the cause of Indian nationality. Acquaintance with the English language also gave to educated Indians ready access to the political writings of the western world, to which, indeed, students were introduced systematically in the classroom. Thus was laid a foundation of democratic and national ideas and aspirations. The Nationalist movement found voice in 1885 in the first Indian National Congress, an unofficial propagandist organization which, as time went on, played an increasing part in the development and formulation of

nationalist aspirations. At first constructive in developing national consciousness, it became increasingly in the twentieth century extreme in its demands and obstructionist rather than coöperative in its tactics.

But the British system in India did more than foster Indian unity and stimulate national sentiment in these ways. Long before there was any official forecasting of eventual home rule for India native Indians were being initiated by their British rulers into the practice of government and admitted to a share in legislation as well as administration. They were employed in subordinate ranks of the state services from the beginning. As early as 1861 they were appointed to the Legislative Councils of the Viceroy and of the provinces. In the 'eighties the elective principle was extended in local affairs and from 1892 there were elected native members on the provincial Legislative Councils. In 1909, when Lord Morley was Secretary of State, an Indian Councils Act was passed by which Indian representation on the Legislative Councils, both of India and of the provinces, was enlarged and the powers of the Councils increased. Non-official members became a majority in the provincial Legislative Councils. To the Executive Council of the Viceroy and of the Governors of several of the Provinces native members were appointed, also to the Secretary of State's Council in London. These reforms marked a long step in the direction of representative government, though Morley disclaimed any thought of their leading to Responsible Government. Before the Great War of 1914 the trend was already long-continued and strong towards self-government for India, alike in the growth of national

sentiment and native propaganda and in the actual policy, whether always consciously so intended or not, of the British Government. This despite the fact that in the interest of order it had been felt necessary as a rule to combine "concession with repression" of incendiary propaganda.

For India, as for the colonial empire, the war quickened the pace of developments. Participation was generous, from British India and from the Native States, the total approximating, in numbers of men supplied, the combined recruitments of all the Dominions. National sentiment grew and its increasing claims to larger political recognition could be neither denied nor evaded. In 1917 native representatives of the Indian Government took part in the deliberations of the Imperial Conference, of which India now became a recognized member, and in 1918 of the Imperial War Cabinet. Here again Indian familiarity with the English language was a factor of significance. The Empire delegation at the Peace Conference included Indians and the treaties were signed by them as well as by representatives of the Dominions. Under the treaties India became a member of the League of Nations and of the International Labor Office.

In 1917 the British Government announced its intention to take steps in the direction of responsible self-government for India, which it now formally recognized as the goal to be reached as soon as practicable. Mr. Montagu, Secretary of State, conducted an extensive enquiry on the ground in collaboration with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, and their joint *Report*, as epoch-making for India as the Durham *Report* for Canada, recommended changes both in the provincial

and in the Indian governments in the direction of self-government. In consequence an Act was passed in 1919 providing for radical changes. In the provinces a new system was established, styled dyarchy, in which some matters, known as transferred subjects, were entrusted to ministers responsible to the representative assembly, now made mainly elective, while others remained in the hands of governor and council as reserved subjects.<sup>1</sup> A legislature for all British India was set up, comprising a Council of State and a Legislative Assembly, the former partly and the latter mainly elective. The members of the Governor General's Executive Council were all to be nominated members of this legislature, though not responsible to it. Englishmen in the Civil Service soon found themselves not infrequently subordinate to Indian ministers who were responsible to Indian legislatures. The Indianization of the Civil Service and the Army was also greatly increased. The transitional character of the reforms was emphasized by a provision of the Act to the effect that after ten years the whole problem of Indian government was to be investigated with a view to further changes.

Neither the measure of self-government granted by this Act nor its promise of further changes after a decade was sufficient to satisfy a powerful wing of the nationalist party voicing its opinion through the Indian National Congress. Age-long jealousies and mutual distrust and fear were roused to new force among rival religious groups, particularly Hindus and Moslems, as each saw the liability of the other gaining political advantages from the new system. The precarious state

<sup>1</sup> Relating chiefly to the maintenance of law and order.

of Moslem power and influence in the whole Near East at the close of the war increased the tension among Indian Moslems, while the Hindu majority was reluctant to acquiesce in the separate representation accorded to communal minorities in the new system. Moreover, the effect of promises of eventual self-government was minimized by a variety of repressive measures on the part of the British authorities, defended as necessary for the preservation of law and order, but some of them, particularly the "massacre" at Amritsar, of so violent a character as to call down widespread criticism not only in India but in Britain and throughout the Empire.

A dissatisfied section of the Congress party resorted in 1920 to a policy of non-coöperation with British rule. Their leader was Mr. Gandhi, a Hindu barrister, educated in England, who had won a reputation in South Africa before the war for his successful espousal of his Indian compatriots there. During the war he had supported in India the cause of Britain and her allies, but now he was dissatisfied with the fruits, for India, not only political but economic. His influence among Indian nationalists became so great that it is important to examine his point of view. His aims differed in detail at various times, but in general may be summed up as follows. He wished India to secure control of Indian affairs, not merely to satisfy national pride, but rather in order that India might determine her own economic destiny and escape alike exploitation by the West and the remaking of her industrial life along western lines. The use of Manchester cottons, which were cheaper than any that Indian peasants could make, had deprived the Indian agricultural villagers



(nine-tenths of India's population) of an occupation during those months of the year when drought and a hard-baked soil made tillage impossible. Industrializing India would be no real remedy. The situation was one in which the peasant's use of the cheaper machine product had consequences that were economically disadvantageous as well as socially demoralizing. To Gandhi's mind, therefore, India's salvation lay in the repudiation of the materialistic ideals of western industrialism. His plea for the restoration of the textile handicrafts among the peasantry and his personal use of a spinning wheel symbolized his point of view. Some western ideals and devices he would adopt. He made use, for example, of means of rapid transit and a cheap press, and consulted scientific physicians. He advocated the elimination of communal strife and preached the lifting of the Hindu ban on the outcast or depressed classes<sup>1</sup> as well as the emancipation, cultural and political, of women. But these aims he believed India could accomplish for herself, while salvation from the tyranny of the machine, which had already asserted itself so overwhelmingly in the West, she alone could accomplish. Among the political revolutionaries of history he was unique in advocating non-violent civil disobedience as the best and surest and only moral means of attaining his ends.

The non-coöperation movement which began in 1920 gradually petered out. A large part of the Indian community and many of its leaders were satisfied to take part in applying the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms in

<sup>1</sup> These, however, who form the largest minority next to the Moslems, are distrustful of their future without safeguards against Hindu nationalist domination.



the hope of using them as a means towards further progress in building up an autonomous constitution. As the end of ten years approached, however, when the whole matter would come up for reconsideration, agitation again grew rapidly, centering around demands for independence, whether formally within or outside of the British Empire. On the other hand the native princes and considerable classes in British India, particularly minority groups of various sorts, still felt that only British power could protect them in their rights and privileges and maintain order within India and security on her borders.

A non-partisan commission appointed under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon in 1927 to restudy the whole question and make further recommendations as provided for in the act of 1919 failed to receive the goodwill or coöperation of large sections in India because its membership, comprising only members of the British Parliament, to which it would report, included no Indians. Nevertheless, the Commission spent months in India conferring with many Indian statesmen and leaders of Indian opinion as well as with British officials. Its *Report*, published in the summer of 1930, was a comprehensive study and embodied recommendations for many changes involving larger Indian participation in government, both in the provinces and at the center, but denying the wisdom of the demand for full self-government. It also emphasized the need as well as the wisdom of "gradualness" and of elasticity if progress towards larger self-government was to be sound, and good administration and security for the population were to be insured during the transitional period. Frontier defense and the

rights of minorities must be safeguarded, and also that general internal security which involved not only keeping the peace but maintaining those vast and complex administrative services which in a country like India were indispensable for maintaining the food supply and health of the masses and combating the menaces of famine and disease.

Before the *Report* was submitted it became obvious that it would not satisfy most Indian opinion and the British Government, in consultation with the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, who had gained India's confidence to a remarkable degree, announced that the *Report* must not be considered as the final word; a Round-Table Conference would be held in London, to which representatives of all Indian parties would be invited. Furthermore, Lord Irwin gave public assurance in November, 1929, that the 1917 pledge of eventual Responsible Government was still obligatory and that it should be understood as involving Dominion Status or its equivalent for India as soon as that goal could be attained. This assurance received the public confirmation of the leaders of the three British parties, although a wing of the Conservatives, supported by a section of the English press, did their best to insist that such a pledge was supreme folly and that there should be no thought of its redemption even in the distant future.

The Round-Table Conference met in the autumn of 1930 and sat till after the new year, under the guidance of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the Labor Prime Minister. It comprised representatives of all British parties and all phases of Indian opinion except the irreconcilable wing of the Congress party headed by Gandhi, which had resumed tactics of non-coöperation

early in 1930. It witnessed several hopeful developments. The Indian delegates became convinced of the goodwill alike of the British Government and of the mass of the British public, while the latter in turn were on the whole favorably impressed with the abilities and the spirit of India's spokesmen. Gandhi, invited although in prison, had refused to attend, but the more moderate Nationalists who were there went home determined to persuade him if they could to participate in further discussions. The native princes surprised everybody by accepting the principle of a federal India in which they should share along with British India. The conviction that they could not be brought to do so for a long time to come had accounted in considerable measure for the conservatism of the Simon Commission's recommendations. While this display of national feeling on the part of the princes seemed to augur well for the establishment of a federal system in which a central government could be made very largely responsible to a federal legislature, it also strengthened the hands of those who were convinced that defenses and internal security, finance, and the protection of the rights of minorities still required the preservation of a measure of British authority and support, for this had all along been the position of most of the princes. Hindus and Moslems discussed their differences in good spirit for the time being, but it became apparent that the question of the representation of the latter, as a minority in India as a whole though a majority in several provinces, would be a most difficult question to solve. Special representation for the depressed classes and others continued also to present serious difficulties. MacDonald insisted that for these purely Indian ques-

tions a solution should be found by the Indians themselves. Committees were set up to study the principal problems that must be explored in shaping a new constitution for India.<sup>1</sup>

A second Round-Table Conference met in London in the latter part of 1931. Gandhi consented to attend this at the last minute, as a result of a series of conversations with Lord Irwin. The proceedings of the Conference were somewhat interrupted by a financial and political crisis in England involving the reorganization of the Government under MacDonald along National lines, and a consequent general election. The strength of the Conservatives among the supporters of the MacDonald National Government in the new Parliament raised some doubts as to whether the recent British policy towards India could be still pursued. The Conference failed of itself to arrive at anything like a full and satisfactory settlement; communal difficulties and the question of the extent of "safeguards" in the way of British control during the transitional period prevented the completion of the task of devising a satisfactory federal structure. Gandhi got nothing which he could take back to India and display as the fruit of his clamor for "independence." But the Government announced that it could not let difficulties among Indian factions stand in the way of progress in building an Indian constitution, and set forth, as embodying its intentions, proposals involving a some-

<sup>1</sup> The case of the province of Burma is peculiar. It is not culturally or historically part of India, from which, therefore, it wished to be separated. With the probable granting of this plea its constitutional evolution will be simplified by the absence of any complicating federal problem. Being overwhelmingly Buddhist it is fortunate also in lacking the communal strife between rival religious groups that makes the Indian problem so difficult.

what larger measure of Indian control than had been recommended in the *Simon Report*. When this position was challenged in Parliament by Winston Churchill, the leader of those old-fashioned imperialists who remained irreconcilable on the Indian question, it was defended by Simon, now a member of the Government, and supported by an overwhelming vote of the House. It was announced that there would shortly be further conference in India itself in order to get the maximum of Indian participation in the re-making of India's constitution along lines foreshadowing a condition comparable with Dominion Status but involving safeguards for the preservation of order and the guarding of communal rights, the security of frontiers and international relations generally, and the stability of Indian finances.

Indian moderates seemed still hopeful of securing a settlement with safeguards. The recalcitrance of the extreme nationalists served to convince some of the minorities that they needed British support if they were to be secure. On December 27, 1931, the Moslem League, now made aware of the dangers to Moslems involved in the "swaraj," or independence, which they had joined in seeking for India, abandoned it as their goal and substituted "responsible government with adequate safeguards for Moslems." Shortly after Gandhi's return the Government of India, concluding that further attempts to secure coöperation from the Congress Party would merely give it more time to organize subversive activities, declared it an illegal organization and issued a series of repressive ordinances calculated to insure the suppression of attempts to interfere with government by either violent or non-violent methods.

Large numbers of irreconcilables, including Gandhi and his associates, were straightway arrested. It remained to be seen whether, these measures having been taken, it would be feasible, with the coöperation and good will of moderate elements, to carry forward the task of constitutional revision to a successful issue. In the hope that such would be the case three British committees proceeded to India in January, 1932.

#### THE COLONIAL EMPIRE AND THE NEW IMPERIALISM

The present-day colonial Empire, in comparison with the self-governing Dominions or with the Indian Empire, displays even more variety in its history, its present condition, and its political institutions and imperial relations. Most of it is inhabited chiefly by dark-skinned races. The numerous communities (Colonies, Protectorates and Mandated Territories) which comprise it fall mainly into two groups. In one group there is little if any survival of aboriginal institutions, and government is conducted through machinery set up and operated by the British Government with more or less participation by the colonial population. Colonies of this type were mostly acquired more than a century ago, and comprise chiefly the West Indies and certain small possessions scattered around the seven seas that are important as strategic outposts of commerce and imperial power. In political constitution they range all the way from the Responsible Government of Malta, and the old-fashioned mixture of British executive and elected Assembly in Bermuda, Barbados, and the Bahamas, to autocratic rule by a British military or civil officer with no assistance save



from his appointed officials and advisers. In the second group government is generally conducted more or less through native rulers and native laws and institutions, for these colonies, which comprise mainly islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and extensive regions in tropical Africa, are occupied almost entirely by native races.

In certain instances, however, where high altitude compensates for tropical latitude and results in climatic conditions hospitable to Europeans, the situation is somewhat different from that in either of these groups. The inland region between the Union of South Africa and the great lakes was so successfully occupied by English-speaking settlers through the efforts of Rhodes and the British South Africa Company that in Southern Rhodesia it seemed advisable in 1921 to recognize Responsible Government.<sup>1</sup> The black population there, however, so greatly outnumbers the white, that native communities have been retained under an imperial officer. In parts of Kenya also, though it lies on the equator, the climate is suitable for Europeans, of whom there are some thousands. Here the record of exploitation of the natives, both with regard to their land and their labor, has been criticized as ruthless and discreditable. Politically the situation has also been complicated by the growth of a considerable mercantile class of Indians. Demands of the English settlers for Responsible Government and control of the natives have been denied.

In answering a request of the Kenya European

<sup>1</sup> Southern Rhodesia might have joined the Union of South Africa were not the latter so largely Boer. Northern Rhodesia may obtain similar Responsible Government in the near future.



settlers for a larger voice in the Legislative Council of that colony, the British Government in 1930 set forth its ideal clearly:

The goal of constitutional evolution, in Kenya as elsewhere, is admittedly Responsible Government by a Ministry representing an electorate in which every section of the population finds an effective and adequate voice. But that goal cannot be reached at an early date in a community where it has so far been practicable to enfranchise less than 1 per cent of the population, and where the idea of any substantial extension of the franchise finds little general support. For the native African population, indeed, in so far as the tribal organization is still the basis of its social organization, the most promising line of development for the near future may well lie, not in any direct participation in the Legislative Council, but in the increasing importance to be given to the Native Councils.

The goal of Responsible Government for tropical colonies, shared by all races, may seem almost as far away as when Earl Grey talked of it in the middle of the last century as an ideal to be kept in mind for the future. The road to such a goal is unlikely to be either short or smooth. The opposition of the local European oligarchy to so widely based a form of Responsible Government is liable to be comparable with the opposition of the "family compacts" of a century ago to the grant of Responsible Government, save for the intensification of the difficulties by extreme racial differences and consequent antagonisms.

The creation of the Mandate system under the League of Nations, while making possible the assimilation for practical purposes of the tropical colonies

of Germany<sup>1</sup> into the colonial administrations of the "victorious" powers, gave a new international sanction to the principle of trusteeship, by establishing the responsibility of the mandatory power to the Mandates Commission of the League for the manner in which it carried out its trust towards the subject population committed to its care. And in the Covenant of the League a wider obligation was also accepted by imperial powers, to promote the welfare and advancement of native populations in all dependencies.

In the present century and particularly since the Great War there has been rapid development of methods and organization looking to the promotion of social services such as education, public health and conditions of labor, both for Europeans and natives, and more systematic and scientific and therefore more profitable effort to exploit the economic resources as well as meet the economic needs of the dependent Empire. Joseph Chamberlain's conception of this colonial Empire as an estate to be developed has become a ruling principle of colonial policy.<sup>2</sup>

The distinction between the self-governing Empire and the dependent or colonial Empire was marked in 1925 by the creation of a new Secretaryship of State

<sup>1</sup> Of such mandates the United Kingdom received German East Africa (now Tanganyika Territory), and parts of the Kameruns and Togoland, the Union of South Africa received German South West Africa, Australia received German New Guinea (now Papua) and adjacent islands, New Zealand received German Samoa. Nauru was assigned to the British Empire and is administered by Australia.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the numerous institutions set up in recent years for these purposes are concerned chiefly with the needs of the dependent Empire while others serve the whole Empire. For up-to-date information concerning them consult the *Dominions and Colonial Office List*.

for Dominion Affairs in the British Ministry, leaving only the affairs of the dependent Empire to the supervision of the old Colonial Office, which was now reorganized, particularly with regard to the better handling of scientific, medical, and economic and financial problems. In 1927, and again in 1930, a new conference, styled the Colonial Office Conference, was convened, composed of official representatives of a large number of the colonial governments, which dealt with a wide range of subjects of general concern to the Colonies. On many of these it was possible to secure general agreement on policy and it was decided to hold such a Conference periodically. The Colonial Secretary continued to participate also in the Imperial Conference comprising representatives of the British and Dominions Governments and the Government of India, but his rôle therein was now that of representing the interests of the dependent Empire whose affairs were still supervised by the Colonial Office.

#### PALESTINE, IRAQ, AND EGYPT

Palestine and Iraq, freed from Turkish power during the Great War by British forces, were afterwards placed under British authority as mandates, but of a different class from those dealt with in the preceding section. Here it was assumed that British responsibility to the League for peace, order, and good government would be necessary only for a comparatively limited period at the end of which self-government would be attained.

Palestine presented a peculiar problem owing to the fact that, while the large majority of its inhabi-

tants were Moslems, the Zionists of the world hoped to make of it a national home for the Jews. The British Government could not afford to alienate powerful Jewish opinion either at home or abroad, but no more could it afford to affront the sentiment of the Mohammedan world, so much of which lay under the British flag, by fulfilling its war-time pledges to the Zionists in such a manner as to violate the rights of Palestine Moslems. The attempt to hold the balance has been fraught with difficulties. Thus far, in consequence of friction between Jews and Arabs in the country, it has proved impracticable to put into effect provisions promulgated as early as 1922 for the election of part of the Legislative Council.

In Iraq, by contrast, progress towards self-government was so rapid that in 1924 constitutional government was established. In the same year popular ratification was accorded a treaty under which, in 1929, Britain requested through the Mandates Commission that she be relieved of her obligations as mandatory and that Iraq be admitted to the League of Nations. In 1932 the request was granted.

Relations with Iraq as well as with Palestine will continue to be of peculiar importance to Britain. Apart from the value of any concessions for the development of natural resources such as the oil deposits of Iraq, the position of these lands, adjacent to the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, makes them strategically important for the guarding of communications with the East. They lie, moreover, on the direct line of British air routes to India and Australasia.

In the same region, the Suez Canal and British relations with Egypt require notice in any account of

the British Empire, despite Egypt's recognized independence. The canal, opened in 1869, was built by a French company without the backing of either the British government or British investors. But its vital importance to British communications with India and the farther East<sup>1</sup> soon became apparent. Thus in 1875, when the Khedive sought to sell his controlling interest in the company, Disraeli seized the opportunity to purchase his shares for the British Government.

The Khedive's financial difficulties, however, going from bad to worse, Great Britain soon found herself involved in a dual control with France of Egyptian finance. But in 1881 a formidable uprising occurred under Arabi Pasha. France left Britain to intervene single-handed for the restoration of order and the protection of foreign interests. Thus began in 1882 the British occupation of Egypt. Thereafter, though Egypt was still formally a part of the Turkish Empire, its real ruler was the resident British agent. The administration of the country was modernized. Efficient police and sanitary services promoted the security and health of the population, while an improved standard of living was made possible along with an increase in the population by the construction of vast irrigation works in the Nile Valley which greatly expanded the land's productivity. Egypt grew to be the third cotton producing country of the world, and British imports of cotton from Egypt became in time more than half as large as from the United States.

After Turkey's entrance into the Great War Egypt was declared independent of Turkey and under British

<sup>1</sup> Not till later did its importance for traffic with East Africa become so obvious.

protection,<sup>1</sup> and throughout the conflict was an important base for British operations in the Near East. But Egyptian nationalism had been nurtured by the recent closer contacts with western ideas as well as by resentment at European domination. So clamorous did it become after the war that in 1922, on the recommendation of a commission headed by Lord Milner, Britain declared Egypt an independent kingdom, subject however to certain reservations that were intended to safeguard British interests and secure for all foreigners in Egypt that continued protection for which Britain had long assumed the final responsibility.

Egyptians welcomed independent status but disliked the reservations. Negotiations concerning these were repeatedly carried on between the British and Egyptian governments and by 1930 common ground was at last found on all points save concerning the Sudan. A *condominium*, or joint possession of the Sudan by Britain and Egypt, had been set up after its reconquest in 1898 by forces largely Egyptian but organized and led by the British. Upon the recognition of Egyptian independence Egypt took the view that the Sudan should now be wholly hers but Britain refused to admit the point. It was not long, indeed, before Egyptian trouble-making there became the occasion for the firmer establishment of essentially British control. In consequence of the continued failure to reach final agreement regarding the Sudan, other points of controversy between the British and Egyptian governments remained largely unsettled. British troops were

<sup>1</sup> Cyprus, which had been brought under British control at the first convenient opportunity after the Suez Canal purchase, was also now declared severed from the Turkish Empire and was formally annexed. Its importance to Britain is largely strategic.



still in Egypt, and the British High Commissioner continued to exercise special influence on Egyptian policy. The Government of Great Britain, however, latterly refused to intervene in domestic controversies over the constitution.

The British view of the Canal is that it is more than a vital link in the commercial communications of the Empire. That it shall be open to British ships at all times is one of the primary postulates in the strategy of imperial defense. Egypt, moreover, has become an essential factor in connection with the development of British railways in Africa, and of late years acquired a new importance as a pivotal point in the new imperial air routes southward as well as eastward.

In addition to Palestine, Iraq, and Egypt, there are other territories in the Near East, particularly in Arabia, with which British relations are peculiarly close. It is generally understood that it was lands along the route to India which the British Foreign Secretary had particularly in mind in 1928 when, in connection with Great Britain's adhesion to the Briand-Kellogg Pact of Paris, he made a significant reservation amounting to the announcement of a British Monroe Doctrine. He wrote:

There are certain regions of the world the welfare and integrity of which constitute a special and vital interest for our peace and safety. His Majesty's Government have been at pains to make it clear in the past that interference with these regions cannot be suffered. Their protection against attack is to the British Empire a measure of self-defense. . . . The Government of the United States have comparable interests, any disregard of which by a foreign



Power they have declared that they would regard as an unfriendly act.

#### THE INTERDEPENDENT COMMONWEALTH

At every stage in the growth of colonial autonomy from the inception of Responsible Government there were prophecies that the outcome would be imperial disintegration. In the long run Responsible Government did in fact prove incompatible with subordination to imperial authority. Once the principle of autonomy was admitted the widening of its range went steadily on till finally, the equality which had come to be ascribed to the Dominions in the form of Dominion Status having run ahead of the legalities of the situation, the British Parliament brought law into line with political evolution when it consented to abrogate formally its paramount authority over the Dominions by enacting the Statute of Westminster. When that became effective in December, 1931, the Dominion Parliaments acquired full legal independence and legislative equality with the Parliament of the Mother Country, subject only to such limitations as in certain cases were left at their own request. The Dominions were no longer to be called colonies. In political science definitions seldom agree with the facts at the time they are formulated. Before this enactment the technical definition was lagging behind the reality. Afterwards it was in some respects ahead of the everyday facts. Certainly equality of function and of burden had not yet in all cases been entirely assumed. And in some Dominions there was still a strong sentiment that looked up to the mother country as at least *primus*

*inter pares*. It was quite possible, on the other hand, that some Dominions, where there was the sentiment that definitions still lagged behind the facts, would exercise their right of legislating out of existence certain formal vestiges of the old authoritative imperial relationship whose survival even as forms offended their sense of the appropriate. In any case the subjects of the King in any of his autonomous Dominions were now under the authority only of that one of His Majesty's Governments which was responsible to the Parliament in that Dominion. This spelled the triumph of the ideal of freedom from subordination of the King's subjects in one "self-governing" part of his realm to his subjects in another. It was disintegration, however, only in the sense that the paramount power of the "Imperial Government" was now both practically and legally gone so far as the Dominions were concerned. Their association in the so-called Commonwealth remained in the view of most of their citizens a significant reality.

For parallel with the growth of autonomy through the years, and no less significant, ran the development of habits and institutions and ideals of conference and consultation and coöperative action. This was facilitated by those revolutionary improvements of the twentieth century in means of travel and communication that made possible frequent meetings for conference, quick transmission of information and intimate discussion at a distance. In terms of time and space as related to human intercourse the Empire had become as compact as Great Britain had been less than two centuries earlier. The growth of this new and flexible coöperative system, built partly of evolving institutions

and partly of changing conventions, was not checked but stimulated by the rise of the Dominions to their new status. Indeed, in proportion as progressive enlargement of the scope of Dominion Status placed the relations between Great Britain and the Dominions on a firmer footing of equality and thereby removed from the latter any jealous sense of subordination, more and more was stress laid by the peoples and their governments upon the importance of coöperating for common purposes. As the range of common interests increased so did the appreciation of the value of common policy and action and the insistence that these demanded continuous association.

The air became full of schemes for building a new structure of economic unity by an imperial tariff system or other means of unifying and coördinating the economic activities of the Empire, schemes put forward by those who distrusted the adequacy of existing institutions or would make these serve to carry forward some particular economic program. However much or little might come of any such proposals it seemed unlikely that general assent would be given to any project involving the reëstablishment of an imperial authority over any of the Dominions. The tendency seemed rather towards an increasing use of reciprocal agreements, of the nature of treaties, between the governments. How far such agreements could practicably and profitably be made multi-lateral instead of bi-lateral remained to be seen. This problem among others seemed likely to arise at the Imperial Economic Conference that was to meet at Ottawa in 1932.

The development of what may be called the new coöperative constitution was not confined to Great

Britain and the Dominions. In the Imperial Conference the Colonial Empire had a share through the Colonial Secretary, as did India through the Secretary of State for India and representatives of the Indian Government. Inter-governmental agreements reached independently of the Conference were made between governments of different types as well as between Dominions. There was also a visible trend in the direction of assimilating the political position of other colonies as well as India to that of the Dominions. The term Commonwealth had been applied at first only to Great Britain and the Dominions. It was coming to be used sometimes, officially as well as unofficially, to denote the whole Empire, comprising India and the Colonial Empire along with the group of autonomous communities enjoying full Dominion Status.

The political and economic precariousness of the world situation as 1932 opened was doing much to increase the consciousness among the peoples of the Empire-Commonwealth of the reality of their common interests and the extent of their interdependence. This was most strikingly true with regard to the Dominions, whose recent acquisition of legislative independence seemed in many cases to have served chiefly as a reminder of the realities of the imperial fellowship. Till a world order should be achieved which would in itself give to them full political and economic security, they generally seemed likely still to count on their membership in the Commonwealth as the most convenient and surest as well as the traditional means of safeguarding their prosperity and insuring their national safety. For a large proportion, moreover, of the citizens of the Dominions the imperial association constituted no

longer in any sense a limitation upon their political pride and self-respect but rather enhanced it. Their culture, ideals, and political traditions assumed larger stature and significance for them because they were shared with the Commonwealth. In securing independent political status the Dominions had not fore-sworn interdependence, nor had their citizens, politically or culturally, disinherited themselves. They could still feel themselves, along with citizens of other parts of the British world, sharers in the Empire's history and achievements and partners in its future. Their pride as citizens of their respective national communities was not inconsistent with a pride also in their imperial citizenship. The larger loyalty did not interfere with but enriched the smaller. For the future there were as many different forecasts as there were hopes. The one prophecy that could be made with full assurance was that in no respect had the Empire-Commonwealth reached a final stage of evolution. Never more apparent were the flexibility, the ceaseless change and adaptation to new conditions and ideas, that had so strikingly marked it during the last hundred years.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

There is an embarrassing wealth of material in print for the study of British imperial history. The following list suggests a few titles, mostly of recent date. More may be found in *A Select List of Books Relating to the History of the British Empire Overseas*, edited by A. P. Newton for the Historical Association (London, 1929, 24 pp.). Some of the works named below contain useful bibliographies.

The whole Empire is dealt with in three comprehensive series, comprising the coöperative work of many specialists. *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, ed. by J. H. Rose, A. P. Newton, and E. A. Benians, is in course of publication in 8 vols., of which all but Vol. I will deal largely with aspects of the history after 1783. Each volume contains comprehensive bibliographies. Vol. I, *The Old Empire to 1783*, Vol. IV, *British India to 1858*, and Vol. VI, *Canada and Newfoundland*, have already appeared. *An Historical Geography of the British Dominions*, ed. by Sir C. P. Lucas (7 vols., Oxford, various dates), is a group of convenient manuals on the history as well as the historical geography of the respective sections of the Empire. *The Oxford Survey of the British Empire*, ed. by A. J. Herbertson and O. J. R. Howarth (6 vols., 1914), while in some measure historical, treats mainly geographical and allied aspects, together with economic, administrative, and social conditions. It has many maps and illustrations.

Among recent works dealing with the subject as a whole or with large aspects of it a few may be mentioned. Notable general treatments are: A. Demangeon, *The British Empire, a Study in Colonial Geography* (London, 1925); A. F. Pollard, ed., *The British Empire* (London, 1909);



H. Robinson, *The Development of the British Empire* (Boston, 1922); J. A. Williamson, *A Short History of British Expansion* (2nd ed., 2 vols., London, 1930), of which the second volume deals with the Empire since 1783. Works emphasizing political and constitutional aspects are: C. A. Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism* (Copenhagen, 1924); S. C. Y. Cheng, *Schemes for the Federation of the British Empire* (New York, 1931); H. E. Egerton, *A Short History of British Colonial Policy* (London, 1897), and *British Colonial Policy in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1922); W. Y. Elliott, *The New British Empire* (New York, 1932); H. D. Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations* (London, 1920); W. P. Hall, *Empire to Commonwealth, Thirty Years of British Imperial History* (New York, 1928); *Great Britain and the Dominions*, Harris Foundation Lectures, 1927 (University of Chicago, 1928); Rt. Hon. W. M. Hughes, *The Splendid Adventure, a Review of Empire Relations* (London, 1929), by an Australian Prime Minister; E. Jenks, *The Government of the British Empire at the End of the Year 1928* (London, 1929); A. B. Keith, *The Constitution, Administration, and Laws of the Empire* (London, 1924), one of 12 vols. in *The British Empire, a Survey*, ed. by H. Gunn, of which several others also are useful, and *Dominion Autonomy in Practice* (Oxford, 1929); P. Knaplund, *Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy* (London, 1927); W. P. Morrell, *British Colonial Policy in the Age of Peel and Russell* (Oxford, 1930); A. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire* (Oxford, 1926). Works concerned mainly with economics and geography are: W. A. Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles, with Special Reference to the Development of the Overseas Dominions* (London, 1929); H. B. George, *A Historical Geography of the British Empire* (7th ed., London, 1924); L. C. A. Knowles, *The Economic Development of the British Overseas Empire, 1763-1914* (London, Vol. I, 1924, Vol. II, 1930); C. Grant Rob-



ertson and J. G. Bartholomew, *Historical and Modern Atlas of the British Empire* (London, 1924); A. E. W. Salt, *Imperial Air Routes* (London, 1930).

Among recent works on particular sections of the Empire are the following. FOR CANADA: two extensive series, *Canada and Its Provinces*, ed. by A. Shortt and A. G. Doughty (23 vols., Toronto, 1914), and *The Makers of Canada*, revised and enlarged edition edited by W. L. Grant (12 vols., Oxford, 1926), and a more popular and slighter series, *Chronicles of Canada*, ed. by G. M. Wrong and H. H. Langton (32 vols., Toronto, 1914-1916); Sir R. L. Borden,<sup>1</sup> *Canada in the Commonwealth* (Oxford, 1929); A. Brady, *Canada* (London, 1932); C. W. New, *Lord Durham* (Oxford, 1929); W. P. M. Kennedy, *The Constitution of Canada* (Oxford, 1922); Duncan McArthur, *History of Canada* (Toronto, 1927); Chester Martin, *Empire and Commonwealth, Studies in Governance and Self-Government in Canada* (Oxford, 1929); R. G. Trotter, *Canadian Federation, Its Origins and Achievement* (Toronto, 1924), and *Canadian History, A Syllabus and Guide to Reading* (Toronto, 1926); C. Wittke, *A History of Canada* (New York, 1928). FOR AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND: J. B. Condliffe, *New Zealand in the Making* (London, 1929); W. K. Hancock, *Australia* (London, 1931); A. J. Harrop, *England and New Zealand* (London, 1926); A. W. Jose, *History of Australasia from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Sydney, 1927); R. C. Mills, *The Colonisation of Australia, the Wakefield Experiment in Empire Building* (London, 1915); E. Scott, *A Short History of Australia* (Oxford, 1926). FOR AFRICA: J. H. Hofmeyr, *South Africa* (London, 1931); H. L. Hoskins, *European Imperialism in Africa* (New York, 1930), a Berkshire Study; E. A. Walker, *A History of South Africa* (London, 1928). FOR THE IRISH FREE STATE: D. Gwynn, *The Irish Free State, 1922-1927* (London, 1928). FOR INDIA: Sir V. Chirol, *India* (London,

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 80.

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*The Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire* (London, 1920, etc.) gives a quarterly digest of legislative proposals,

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